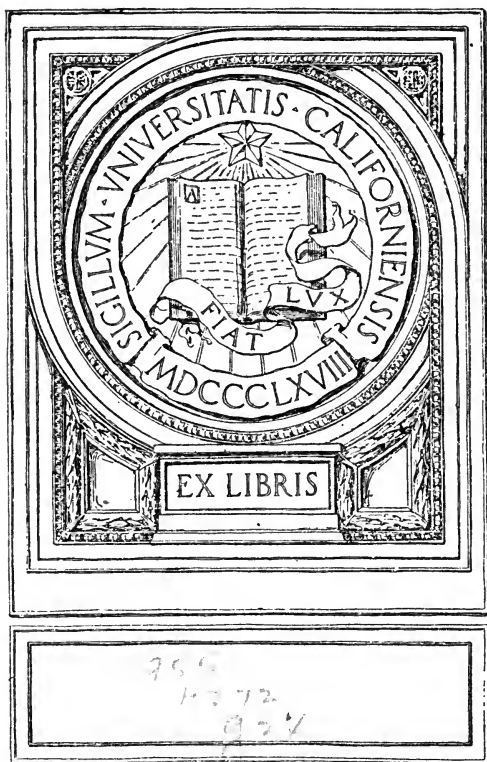


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THOMAS HARDY

An Illustration of the
PHILOSOPHY OF SCHOPENHAUER

THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Hardy 1840-1928.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

USE OF PHILOSOPHY IN LITERATURE.

Much has been written of Thomas Hardy, much more will be said. Great men are not disposed of in a few volumes. To couple his name with that of Schopenhauer even is no longer a new matter. The present study pretends to give no final word of criticism and no comprehensive appreciation. It aims to be one-sided and intensive. It is a search into the reason why *The Return of the Native* or *Tess* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge* should come to the lips as an illustration of the philosophy of *The World as Will and Idea*. How much of a philosopher Hardy, the writer, is, how nearly his philosophy resembles that of Schopenhauer, how it has affected his work, and to what conclusions it has brought him are the questions it will consider.

To-day scholars are contributing articles to the Modern Language Association publications to show first, that the *Pearl* is a real lament of a real father over a lost daughter, second, that the poem is a theological dissertation woven about a straw child. Will the Modern Language Association writers of some distant future expend their strength to prove that Thomas Hardy wrote novels, poems, and one stupendous drama to set forth a scheme of philosophy he had; or, on the contrary, that he wrote because an artist must write, and that the philosophy leaked in as the theology leaked into the *Pearl*, because the air was supersaturated with it. One is tempted to press the analogy to its limits, to foreshadow the arguments pro and con, and to suggest that the decision may long be a matter of individual preference. Without going so far, however, the inference seems clear that even as the Middle Ages produced their theological literature, their Body and Soul debates, their *Piers Plowman* and *Pearl*, and even as they had their burning questions of predestination and free-will, and whether men are saved by grace of God or by their own merits; so to-day we have our philosophical literature, and our burning questions of

optimism and pessimism, of whether we shall extol life or endure it.

After all, what could be more natural? Literature must reflect the interests of its time or lose its vitality. There are certainly eternal laws of beauty which cannot be evaded, there are just as certainly eternal laws of life which cannot be neglected, and the ever-insistent problem of art is to keep these two harnessed together, a task as difficult as that of driving the famous chariot of Plato.

Some politics, some economics, some religious unrest, some philosophy must be reflected in the literature of to-day. If the abstruse and difficult philosophical systems of a Kant, a Fichte, and a Hegel could profoundly affect a Coleridge and an Emerson, how much more will the works of a Schopenhauer, a Nietzsche, a Von Hartmann affect the writing, and even the reading public! For the one person who can enjoy Kant's subtleties, there are twenty who can grasp Nietzsche's vagaries. Perhaps we have grown wiser, perhaps the philosophers speak more clearly, perhaps the great spirits are no longer with us. At any rate, we have learned to regard Mill and Huxley and Spencer and the three Germans and others of the hour as part of our necessary stock-in-trade for culture and for conversation. A few years ago one chatted over a cup of tea about William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and *Will to Believe* with the same people with whom one had exchanged pleasantries about *Hugh Wynne*, or Mrs. Humphry Ward's latest intricate piece of womankind. Now we give one breath to *The Stooping Lady*, another to wireless telegraphy, and turn to meet *Pragmatism* at the corner; yes, even in popular University Extension lectures. Macaulay's history lay on my fine lady's dressing-table, Pope's "Essay on Man" was the talk of the fashionable world, William James is charged with writing novels and dubbing them Philosophies. When philosophy grows as interesting as a novel, how can the novel, which is true to life, help reflecting philosophy? An utterly unphilosophical literature to-day would be as much of an anomaly as an untheological Milton.

Mr. Henry Newbolt, in a review of *The Dynasts*, in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1909, recognizes this new

tendency. "There can be no doubt," he says, "of the development wrought by modern science and philosophy in human feeling, or rather in that combination of thought and feeling which determines each man's view of the world." He enforces his observation by giving the following quotations from Milton and from Laurence Binyon to show, not, as he says, the merit of either, but "the simple truth that philosophy has given to Mr. Binyon an opportunity which the theology of the seventeenth century could not offer to Milton."

Paradise Lost, Book VIII, lines 261-271.

"About me round I saw
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
— And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked, or flew;
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
With supple joints, as lively vigour led;
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
Knew not."

Laurence Binyon, "Death of Adam."

"On my opening eyes
The splendour of the world shone slowly in,
Mingling its radiant colours in my soul.
Yea, in my soul and only in my soul
I deemed them to abide; sky, water, trees,
The moving shadow and the tender light,
This solid earth, this wide and teeming earth,
Which we have trodden, weary, step by step,
Nor found beginning of an end of it,
I deemed it all abounding in my brain;
The murmur of the waters and the winds
Seemed but a music sighing from my joy,
Then I arose, and ventured forth afoot;
And soon, how soon, was dispossessed of all!
By every step I traveled into truth

That stripped me of my proud dreams, one by one,
 Till all were taken. On such faltering feet
 By gradual but most certain steps I came
 Into my real and perfect solitude,
 Alone amid the world that knew not me."

It is not surprising, then, to find Nietzsche put into drama by Bernard Shaw, to hear of him in John Davidson, to find traces of him in Ibsen, Hauptmann, Sudermann, to come across echoes of the Neo-Platonists in Maeterlinck's *Treasures of the Humble*, to see Spinoza in Bourget's *Le Disciple*, one phase of Schopenhauer in Maeterlinck's *Life of the Bee* and *Intelligence of the Flowers*, another in Guy de Maupassant's "La Ficelle", to have Browning's "Instans Tyrannus" given as an illustration of a point in Hegel, or Kant's great apostrophe to Duty compared to Wordsworth's ode, to find Zola's *L'Assommoir* and *La Terre* mentioned as exemplifying the Schopenhauerian pessimism and Sturge Moore's poem, "In Centaur's Booty" as "subtly presenting all that is poetically valuable in the idea of the Superman as now current among us." One stumbles upon so many allusions to philosophy in literature that one begins to feel that time alone is needed to enable one to form a goodly list of works that reflect, whether consciously or unconsciously matters not, some phase of some philosopher.

Nor is it a strange development. They "be of one blood", and Philosophy can always say to Literature, as Gray Brother said to Mowgli: "Thy trail is my trail, thy lair is my lair, thy kill is my kill, and thy death-fight is my death-fight." Have they not been suckled by the same mother, the great mother, Truth; and, though one may go upon four legs, one upon two, are not the traces of the mother in both? Those same trifling adverbs, "whence" and "how"; that little "what", which formed the riddle of the universe for Thales, still compose the riddle for Schopenhauer; the relation of man to the gods, the form the "how" took in Aeschylus, is still the theme of Hardy. And just as I hope to show that Schopenhauer and Hardy delineate the same country, the one by a relief map, the other by a model of villages and fields, animals and

people, which serve but to accentuate the hills and valleys of the severer map; so all the philosophers, all the great writers, save the absolute realists, have ever striven to mirror the great country that lies beyond. Life is greater, stronger, infinitely more interesting than books, be they of philosophy, or be they of poetry; and as long as we have men of the Lafcadio Hearn type, which will be as long as we have men at all, profoundly interested in the "Universal Riddle", in "the Whence, the Whither, the Why", these will be the real topics of philosophy and of literature. The genuine kinship has always been there, and always will be there; it merely happens that in our day we are privileged to see the joining of hands.

Philosophy, politics, finance, science, almost any subject man can think, may enter literature, as long as it enters by way of man's feelings; but let it once attempt to get in by the door of his intellect, and all is lost. Didacticism is the one enemy of literature, purpose the one dragon that rouses the St. George in her. As soon as Purpose with a capital P begins to strut, art dwindles to a little "a," and that is a synonym of mediocrity.

In Paul Bourget's *Le Disciple*, we have an openly philosophical story. The hero, a philosopher, has been deeply influenced by the thought of an older philosopher, whose fundamental principle is that the world is a-moral, because man must follow out a given nature, and is therefore irresponsible for his acts, which can not be judged as good or bad. The hero regards himself as a psychological problem, and jots down in a note-book his various emotions as he tries to seduce a young and noble girl, grows to love her, does seduce her, breaks the suicide pact he had formed with her, and, when she takes her own life, is arrested for her murder. From beginning to end the story holds your attention, but it holds you as the story of the three Léonies who inhabited one body, or any other tale of the Society for Psychical Research holds you, through your curiosity and not through your artistic sense.

There could be no better example of what Hardy has not done. You will not find in him any such open, direct, frank statement of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, as Bourget has given of Spinoza. Hardy is not deliberately setting forth any

philosophical system, neither that of any pronounced philosopher, nor even his own, unless it be in *The Dynasts*. He is too true to nature for that. (He knows that men do not live by consistent systems of conduct and thought; that there are all the impulses and instincts to be reckoned with; that even Schopenhauer, who thought he had found an unfailing solution, did not himself follow the path of his denial of the "will to live.")

Philosophy is a part of life because it stands for man's groping after the unknown, his attempt to comprehend what is given, but it must always follow after and never precede. Man acts, then he reflects, or in the phrase of a Von Hartmann, the Unconscious comes before the Conscious. All of which Hardy realizes. One suspects that he has been a great reader of philosophy, partly because he mentions the names of so many philosophers in his books, partly because it seems natural and consistent for a man who is so oppressed and depressed by the lack of system in the world, to seek for a clue among the people who have gone at the problem instead of around it. But whatever raw material he has gained in his search he has refrained from inflicting on his reader. He has the power of assimilation, of stamping his thought with his own individuality; so that the philosophy which we find in his books is his own, a true native product, no matter whence the seeds were imported.

Why, then, is he selected as an illustration of the philosophy of Schopenhauer? Simply because any one who is familiar with the main points of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, and reads Hardy feels that here is a curious sympathy of outlook upon life. Here are two men who view life through the same glasses, dark glasses if you will, lenses that distort if you will, but lenses that are similar, surely. How far Schopenhauer is responsible for this attitude of Hardy seems, at present, a question which can be limited, but not answered. One must await a fuller biography or an autobiographical statement. The mention of Schopenhauer in *Tess*, and in a letter in the *Academy* concerning Maeterlinck's "Apology for Nature" justify the assumption that he is at least familiar with the work of that philosopher. In a letter, however, which he

very courteously sent me in answer to an inquiry, Mr. Hardy speaks of his philosophy being a development from Schopenhauer through later philosophers. So we can only proscribe limits to the question. On the one hand, he has not deliberately and consciously set out to give artistic expression to the Schopenhauerian philosophy; on the other he constantly suggests it. Influence is too strong and definite a word for the result attained, sympathy comes nearer to it. There is a noteworthy and observable sympathy between the philosophy of Thomas Hardy and that of Schopenhauer.

Those words, the philosophy of Hardy, lead one back for a moment to the inartistic novel of Bourget. Is Hardy artistic or does he, as Lionel Johnson suggests in speaking of *Tess*, need to be separated from his own philosophy before he can be enjoyed? Certainly most people separate them. They like him because he brings all Wessex to them, because he takes them out-of-doors, because he pleases their delicate sense of humor, but always in spite of his philosophy. All of which is justifiable. There is no law, artistic or moral, commanding people to look into the depths of life, and the depths of Hardy are stern and lead only to a negative courage. Nevertheless, such a separation proves only the reader's inherent need of brightness, not Hardy's need of revision. The question is the old one of whether a man must keep his own personality out of his books entirely, or whether he may occasionally play the part of the Greek chorus and take the reader aside for a moment. Some of us consider that trait Thackeray's great weakness, others of us are very grateful to him for being weak.

It is a matter of interest that both Hardy and Bourget have spoken in the same magazine, the *Eclectic* for June, 1891, in favor of subjectivism in art. Bourget thinks that events are interesting because of their interest to the narrator, and that whatever is interesting to the narrator is a subject for art; provided only, that it be artistically presented. "In every novel," he says, "the primary condition is, that it must be an imaginative fragment of human life." By this formula, "the novel is distinguished from psychology pure and simple. La Bruyère in his *Caractères*, La Rochefoucauld in his *Maximes*, differ from the novelist merely by lacking this color of life.

They have observation, profound or comic touches, everything, indeed, except the power of painting human beings as they act or feel."

Hardy, in like manner, thinks that art lies in the way in which a matter is presented. "The most devoted apostle of realism, the sheerest naturalist, cannot escape, any more than the withered old gossip over her fire, the exercise of Art in his labor or pleasure of telling a tale." He continues, "With our widened knowledge of the universe and its forces, and man's position therein, narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment, as would also artistic works in form and color, if further spectacles in their sphere could be presented. Nothing but the illusion of truth can permanently please, and when the old illusions begin to be penetrated, a more natural magic has to be supplied."

With the same theory, then, that anything may be a subject of fiction, provided it is presented in a manner true to life, and that the narrator has the right to play the part of colorist, as he does in every day life, Hardy has succeeded, where in this one novel, *Le Disciple*, Bourget has failed. The success of the former is due to his skill in welding together two interests not always congenial, the pure and simple story, his interpretation of the story. Perhaps there was never a time when people could so well appreciate the compelling need of the author to introduce such an interpretation, and the difficulty of doing it well. To-day we are all familiar with our two selves: the one which acts, and the other which sits back and watches the acting. Selma Lagerlöf describes this second self as a creature with "eyes of ice" and "long, bent fingers," who sits in the soul's darkest corner and picks to pieces our being. She turns from the joyous description of olden times when the people did not think as we think, to tell of this spirit of introspection which makes every person a spectator of the drama of his own life. But just as the figure with "the staring, icy eyes" and "busy, picking fingers" killed all emotion in the beautiful Marianne, so it can kill all spontaneity in literature, if it is allowed to creep out too far from its corner. It is questionable whether, in *The Dynasts*, Hardy has not allowed the second self to creep out too far from its corner; although

if Mr. Henry Newbolt has the true insight, that is the very value of *The Dynasts*, a value we shall appreciate as we develop our own second selves more and more. Aside from *The Dynasts*, there is at least one reader of Hardy who does not feel that his two selves are inartistically blended, who does not need to separate him from his philosophy, indeed who could as little imagine the Hardy stories without the gloomy Hardy background, as those of Hawthorne without the pensive, ante-Puritan melancholy. In both the mood is the man.

What is this mood in Hardy that so permeates all his stories? Briefly, that there is very much that is wrong in the world, and that no one cares. God has forgotten the Earth. All creation groaneth and travaileth—and for no reason. This is the theme that recurs again and again like the motif of a Wagner opera, that grows loud in the poems and the later novels, and reaches a finale in *The Dynasts*. This, too, is the theme of Schopenhauer; the purposelessness of life, the lack of reason, the eternal revolution of the wheel, and the failure of events to lead to any goal.

Why these two men should hold this view of life, a view which we have seen to be repugnant to the general mass of mankind, is, though an interesting question in itself, one that does not concern this study; which aims merely to establish the facts of the sympathy between them, and to show some kindred results to which such a philosophy led them. I have chosen the facts of the case rather than the theories, in spite of the interesting suggestions of causes that have occurred to me, or have been mentioned to me, such as the hint of insanity in the Schopenhauer family, and the pronounced bitterness of his character; and with Hardy, the love of mediævalism and of an age of faith, the sense perhaps, that William Morris had, that "he is born out of his due time," his childlessness, his residence in a country that is decaying and rapidly becoming depopulated by the drift to towns. There is just one of these suppositious causes that needs to be examined, because it shows that wheresoever the seeds came, there was in Hardy the very soil to bring them to maturity.

A careful reading of the poems of William Barnes, true and faithful delineator of the country he loved so well, shows

how much Hardy owed to Wessex. We find not only the fascinating dialect words, "so's," "randy," "arm-in-crook," "hag-rid," and the descriptions of tranter, club walkings, and homely feasts, but the same fidelity to life, best appreciated by those who have gone to country junketings, in describing the rough and boisterous dances and pastimes, which makes the party at Tranter Dewy's, where the poor man felt the heat too much, and that of Giles Winterborne with its makeshift house-keeping, such delightful reading. This is the realism of Falstaff and his merry comrades. But of the sense of the grandeur and the sublime forlornness of nature, as on an Egdon Heath, Barnes has no trace; as he has none of the feeling of the antiquity of Wessex. He is comparable to Burns. It is the homely, heart-touching side of Wessex he brings to us; the moving days, the courtships, the happy firesides, the Sundays when the farmer walks about his farm to enjoy it. And with it all no hint nor trace of purposelessness. Barnes' "God is in His heaven, and all's right with the world."

"If winter vrost do chill the ground,
'Tis but to bring the zummer round,
All's well a-lost where He's a-vound
Vor if 'tis right, vor Christes seäke
He'll gie us more than he do teäke,—
His goodness don't gi'e out, John."

But even in a Wessex tavern, or among the humblest cottage folk, Hardy's God is not surely in His heaven. Like Dame Quickly in Henry V, "So a' cried out 'God, God, God' three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet," they accept him conventionally and doubt him intrinsically. "I ha'n't been (to church) these three years," said Humphrey, "for I'm so mortal sleepy of a Sunday, and 'tis so mortal far to get there, and when you do get there, 'tis such a mortal poor chance that you'll be chose for up above, when so many bain't that I bide at home and don't go at all."

"Yes, not but I was a Methodist once—ay, for a length of time. 'Twas owing to my taking a house next door to a

chapel; so that what with hearing the organ bizz like a bee through the wall, and what with finding it saved umbrellas on wet Zundays, I went over to that faith for two years—though I believe I dropped money by it—I wouldn't be the man to say so if I hadn't."

In like manner, Barnes says,

"An' if there be mouths to be ved,
He that sent em can send me their bread,
An' will smile on the chile
That's a-new on the knee."

Hardy retorts when some one has said, "God A'mighty always sends bread as well as children," "But 'tis the bread to one house and the children to another." Barnes sees the soldiers going away and sings them a song of God-speed; Hardy sees them going, thinks that so went Vespasian's legions and Cerdic, the Saxon's hosts and that the world has learned no better way. Fancy for instance what Hardy would have told about the man who cut J. L. and T. D. in the tree, and cut the L lightly because it was soon to turn into a D. He would not have returned to fulfill his mission. All of which goes to show that Empedocles' theory of perception had a symbolic truth in it, like does perceive like. There is something in Hardy that perceives the melancholy, the fatalism of the rustic character, and the tragedy of an event. Some strain of deepest melancholy must be innate in a man whose thought when he sees a comet is that when it returns again all the people now witnessing it will be gone.

Just as one is repelled by Schopenhauer's egoism and his rancour, so one is attracted by Hardy's honesty and sincerity. When he longs to believe, and regrets his utter inability to have such faith as others have, then one feels that whatever may be the causes of environment or heredity that turn Hardy into a pessimist, the cause of causes lies in himself. Such is his nature. Born like Schopenhauer to see the world as an evil thing, because a purposeless thing.

CHAPTER II.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PURPOSELESSNESS.

An unconscious optimist who was about to read her first Hardy novel and had been told she would find it pessimistic, remarked, "Pessimism, that's when you look for the dark side, isn't it? And optimism you look for the bright. I always get those two mixed up." It is doubtful whether, when the last word on these subjects has been said by the philosophers and thinkers, it will amount to more than that, a looking for the dark side and a looking for the bright; with, perhaps, the corollary which the writer of "De Profundis" and "The Imprecipient" would surely add that the pessimist is under the necessity of looking for the dark, the optimist for the bright.

Like all words which connote whole developing movements, such as romanticism and classicism; rationalism and empiricism; these opposing terms are incapable of definition. We may strike out clever analogies, telling words, illuminating phrases like Pater's "desire of beauty" in romanticism, or even witticisms like the optimist seeing the doughnut, the pessimist the hole; but a succinct definition is, from the nature of the problem, one of the things we must leave for some super-sensible existence. The irony of such words is that the very people who most realize their incapability of definition short of a treatise are the ones who are immediately forced to an attempt to define, or to explain their own meanings. However, for the purposes of this inquiry, the only limitation that is needed is the generally conceded, because inherent, one of opposition. A man cannot at the same time be both pessimist and optimist. If the sum of his pessimistic moments exceeds his optimistic then he is a pessimist, and vice versa. It is a plain question of sums because the absolutely consistent pessimist and the absolutely consistent optimist are, happily, mere ideals.

But in this array of the foemen, there is one kind of so-called optimism which ought to be rigorously excluded. I

mean, the optimism of all unthinking and of all superficially thinking people, the optimism that rather prides itself on shutting its eyes. In the *Return of the Native*, Hardy, speaking of Clym Yeobright's features, says that a physically beautiful man has become an anachronism. The "spirit of sufferance" which has replaced the "zest for existence" must ultimately enter into the countenances of men. Perhaps it is some such feeling of the age of the race which makes even the rawest pessimism seem more honest and dignified than this crude optimism. "What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel." There is surely something in the race to-day which makes despair, rebellion, and the melancholy minor key, though not good in themselves, more consistent with our time than flat complacency.

These complacent optimists who are afraid to read, afraid to think, lest they light on something to disturb their equanimity, are usually irritated by pessimists. They would like to convert them and have the whole round world a happy, optimistic country waving palms and singing songs. Pessimists, on the contrary, are rather envious of these opponents, for pessimists are always full of self-pity because they have gone beyond the Golden Age. The real opponents of pessimism are those optimists who have so retained their touch of the Golden Age that they are able by its help to see a future Age of Gold. These oppose to the stoicism which is the outcome of pessimism, the "train for ill and not for good" attitude, not the mawkishness nor sentimentality of the easy-going optimism, but a noble faith which, recognizing the dark side and often recognizing its inability to dispel this gloom, still believes in the bright side, because it must.

Reading, thought, and observation convince one that life, both in general and in the individual, has two sides, and that according as the emphasis is shifted we have optimism or pessimism. This shifting of the emphasis depends so largely on the nature of the individual that one is tempted to wonder whether these terms are not purely subjective, and whether there exists any one large-minded enough and sane-minded enough to determine whether life is good or bad.

All thinking persons come to a Tantalus-like picture in the course of their thinking. It is that man has certain instincts, deep-ingrained, and that these are never satisfied. The general desire for happiness, which is always in excess of its gratification; the desire for life which once drove men to seek fountains of perpetual youth, and now drives them to seek cures for malignant diseases and the nevertheless "quick-coming death"; the desire to do certain acts without the accompanying power which Browning has happily expressed in "The Last Ride," "What hand and brain went ever paired"; are all forms of this enigma. But more subtle and more conflicting are some of the answers that philosophy gives us. Every people and every nation has a desire for morality, a desire sufficient to make them evolve some system of morals. Every one hopes and expects to find, in answer to this longing, some basis on which to build a universal morality, and no one finds it. Locke in his discussion of innate qualities and Hume in a truly delightful Gulliverian dialogue have shown that what is revered in one country is abhorred in another. Nor has Kant with his famous categorical imperative done any more than assume such a basis. In the same way we have a passionate longing for certainty, for finding some one thing that is sure and stable and to which we can cling, something that is absolute and immutable; and all we get from philosophy is an overwhelming sense of the relative nature of all knowledge, and of the impossibility of finding the absolute. It was this desire that led Newman to seek refuge in the Catholic Church. If he could not reach the absolute through reason, he could cling to it through tradition. Again, man has in him the sense of law, so vitally within him, that, as Kant has proved, the law we find in nature we ourselves put there. One would naturally expect to find, somewhere, an answering law; but it is just this lack of law without that troubles Hardy. "Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive; why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order. One may, indeed, admit the possibility of a

retribution lurking in the catastrophe. Doubtless some of Tess D'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same wrong even more ruthlessly upon peasant girls of their time. But though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter."

So that one can turn in many ways and find always something that baffles. It is all desires and longings, unfulfillment, silence. Here is the dividing of the ways. According to the answer a man gives to this question is he pessimist or optimist; the former, when he finds this baffling process utterly purposeless, and the latter when he sees in it something purposive. One may, for instance, be a Kant with an overwhelming love of system and because one has seen man's necessity to put law in nature feel the need of formulating postulates that bring law outside of nature. Put as much purpose as you can in nature, says Kant, and your life will have unity. Or one may take the attitude of Lafcadio Hearn which is, in part, the attitude of Maeterlinck, that this longing will grow so imperious, so merciless that it must evolve within men new powers which will enable them to achieve the impossible, to perceive the invisible. Or one may take the Pragmatic attitude, what is useful is believable; or the simple Christian attitude of those who having not seen, still believe. All these varying solutions will help men to infer a purpose where no purpose is to be seen.

But there are others who find no comfort in these answers, because they can never forget the injustice of the question. Such a one is Mr. Hardy when he replies to some one who has vindicated M. Maeterlinck's "Apology for Nature," that though she is not just from our point of view, she may practice a scheme of morality unknown to us. "Far be it from my wish to disturb any comforting fantasy, if it be barely tenable. But, alas, no profound reflection can be needed to detect the sophistry of M. Maeterlinck's arguments, and to see that the original difficulty recognized by thinkers like Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Haeckel, etc., and by most of the persons called pessimists, remains unsurmounted. Pain has been and pain is; no new

set of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators, the bearers thereof. And no injustice, however slight, can be atoned for by her future generosity, however ample, so long as we consider Nature to be, or to stand for, unlimited power. The exoneration of an omnipotent Mother by her retrospective justice becomes an absurdity when we ask, what made the foregone injustice necessary to Her Omnipotence?" He then suggests that Nature is either blind or an automaton, which simply throws the responsibility a stage further back.

Schopenhauer, as Hardy suggests, recognizes a difficulty. He accepts all Kant's subjectivism and believes that the world is his idea, but he does not accept Kant's sense of purposiveness. He finds instead, back of the world, a blind and purposeless "will-to-live" which is ever warring upon itself, ever consuming itself because that is its nature. In a sense, Schopenhauer is the exceptional, Kant the normal man. All of us would gladly add to the mechanical purposiveness, which even pessimists unhesitatingly accept, a teleological purposiveness. Most of us can do so; there are those here and there who cannot. As Mr. Housman says, on them is the burden. "Them it was their poison hurt."

We sometimes speak as if pessimism were a new growth, a thing of our own time, and forget that the Job-like type of man has always been with us. The prosperity of the sinner is the theme of the three books of wisdom literature: "Ecclesiastes," "Ecclesiasticus" and "Wisdom of Solomon"; while the corresponding punishment of the righteous is portrayed in "Job." Old Omar Khayyâm felt the impotence of the world.

"And that inverted Bowl we call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die;
Lift not thy hands to It for help—for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou and I."

Lucretius felt the power of the "will to live," in all its force. "Moreover, we are ever engaged, ever involved in the same pursuits, and no new pleasure is struck out by living on; but whilst what we crave is wanting, it seems to transcend all the rest; then, when it has been gotten, we crave something

else, and ever does the same thirst of life possess us, as we gape for it open-mouthed." In somewhat the same vein, Pascal felt the restlessness of the human spirit, "On cherche le repos en combattant quelques obstacles; et si on les a surmontés, le repos devient insupportable." Lionel Johnson has given quotations from Pascal and from Newman showing that they arraigned the world as severely as Hardy. They see only the bitterness and misery of man, and no reflection of the world's creator. But, as he shows, they both find something within them which prevents their reaching the conclusion that actual experience would force upon them.

It is just in this respect that both Hardy and Schopenhauer often seem more oriental than occidental. As long as men retain a belief in a future life where all debts may be paid, and injustice compensated with hundred-fold justice, they will find excuses for the criss-cross management of this world. But when that is gone, as it is with Hardy and was with Schopenhauer, the full weight of purposelessness breaks upon them. Moreover, if they are keenly alive to human suffering, their woe is increased. That Schopenhauer, in spite of his contempt for the average man, was very sensitive to human misery, we know from accounts of his boyhood. Hardy's humanitarianism shows in the boy Jude, who will not step on earth-worms; in Gabriel Oak who when he sees the dead sheep, thinks first of their misery, then of his loss in money; and in Tess who was most tender to all life.

The Schopenhauerian philosophy which is spread through so many volumes is, thanks to his habits of reiteration, capable of a brief statement. With the more genuinely philosophical parts, the criticism of Kant and the welding together of some of the Kantian doctrines, we have nothing to do. Schopenhauer believed that he had made a great discovery, that he was unique among philosophers and would ever occupy the highest niche of philosophical fame. Time has shown how he over-estimated his powers, but it has also popularized his thought and some of his expressions. His system has two main ideas which give the title to his chief work, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. The first consideration in this volume, that the world is Idea, is akin to the subjective idealism of the earlier

German school. Schopenhauer has given the term Idea to this theory that the world of phenomena is an appearance dependent upon the nature of the observer, and he is fond of alluding to the eastern religions, which habitually show that the world is illusion, the "veil of Maya." Such a belief breathed in for centuries as in Japan and India, would doubtless color life and eventually literature, but in the less mystic occidental countries, it has not yet permeated fiction, and one feels that as far as life and books are concerned a man may regard the world as something subjective or something objective and his neighbors will perceive no difference in his daily conduct and his artistic productions. There are passages in Hardy's novels which just suggest this subjective idealism, as when he speaks of Tess fancying the natural processes were part of her own story, and adds "for the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what they seemed they were"; but though such views may belong to his speculative hours, they are not vital enough to his whole work to need consideration; and therefore we can dismiss this side of Schopenhauer.

With this philosopher, however, the world is not only Idea, but Will, and to make clear the nature of this Will is his whole end and aim. His full discovery is not the mere recognition of the "will to live," which Aristotle for one had mentioned, but the nature and overwhelming importance of this desire, and its far-reaching effects. Not only is the second book of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* an exposition of this thesis, but all the work of Schopenhauer, save in those places where he vents his ire and spleen and venom on Fichte, Hegel and Schelling, is an exploitation of the importance of the "will-to-live."

The World as Will is the basis, the "Grund" of the World as Idea. All the phenomenal world, all this veil of illusion, is the direct result of the "will to live." The Will in its struggle for existence takes the form, for instance, of rock crystals, of bees, of flowers, of man; yet the will does not divide itself up and apportion such an amount for minerals, such for vegetables, such for animals. It is one and the same Will for all, although in the crystal it is too vague to be formulated, in the bee it may take the form of a will of the species, as Maeter-

linck has adequately shown in the *Life of the Bee*, in man, of the individual will. Just here enters the tragedy of the Will. It cannot take all these forms without having the forms come into conflict. It is as if there were one small basin of soap-suds and twenty children who wanted to blow bubbles. Some will be pushed aside, some will secure only a dip of the pipe, and none will have as much of the bubble material as they want. "Thus everywhere in nature we see strife, conflict, and alternation of victory, and in it we shall come to recognize more distinctly that variance with itself which is essential to the will. Every grade of the objectification of will fights for the matter, the space and the time of the others. The permanent matter must constantly change its form; for under the guidance of causality, mechanical, physical, chemical and organic phenomena, eagerly striving to appear, wrest the matter from each other, for each desires to reveal its own Idea. This strife may be followed through the whole of nature, indeed nature exists only through it." Kant showed in the course of his discussion of the purpose in nature, that the vegetable kingdom seems to exist for the herbivorous animals, the herbivorous for the carnivorous, and these in turn for the use of man; but looked at in another way, which he attributed to Linnaeus, man thins out the carnivorous animals, who in turn thin out the herbivorous, who perform the necessary thinning out of the crowded vegetable kingdom. Therefore one could never conclude, thinks Kant, which was the purpose of nature, man or the vegetable kingdom; and he proceeds to attack the problem in another way. With Schopenhauer the conclusion matters less than the nature of the problem. Since you have the same will in animals, minerals, vegetables, you have a will at war with itself; and it is this sense that the will feeds on itself which makes him call it blind and purposeless.

The two characteristics of the will, then, are desire to exist and strife for existence. This makes the wheel of life. The will cannot stop willing since that is its very nature, is all that it is, and as long as it wills, it must of necessity will conflict. "The inner being of unconscious nature is a constant striving without end and without rest." But in man this will reaches its greatest tragedy because man alone grows con-

scious of the will's irresponsible and capricious character. Therefore man when he becomes sufficiently introspective is sick at heart and despairing, and longs to escape from a world which is such a pitiable farce. Moreover, man has an added drop of bitterness, because while in the lower forms of life, species contends with species or individual with individual, in man the individual is himself a battle ground. There are moods when no book of the Bible satisfies us as does "Ecclesiastes." They are the moments when it comes home to us that love, ambition, pleasure must all end in satiety. Schopenhauer gives us an intensified Ecclesiastes. [For not only is the result of every desire "vanity and vexation of spirit," but the real irony lies in the necessity of desiring. No sooner have we become bored with one thing, than we long for another; we obtain that, only to fail to find satisfaction in it, and to grasp at something else. We continue this senseless revolution, even after we realize that it can never bring us anywhere, just because of the strength of the will that is in us.

The man of Ecclesiastes had the relief of a wholesome fear of God; the Schopenhauerian man has no God to fear, nor would he be worth fearing if he had one. Where, then, is there any relief? Schopenhauer points out two, one temporary, the other permanent. The first is the enjoyment of the beautiful, the second is the famous denial of the "will to live." In the third book of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, in which Schopenhauer treats of the beautiful, he is very close to Plato's "Doctrine of the Ideas." Beauty is something objective, something which the artist or the appreciator of art sees outside himself, and endeavors to express or to understand. It is said of Michael Angelo that he saw the statue in the marble and freed it. In the process of freeing, our philosopher would say, the artist loses himself, and forgets the misery of existence; in the process of contemplating what is freed, the observer passes out of himself for the moment. They substitute for their sense of what is individual, the sense of what is universal, what is an archetype; but in time this larger outlook becomes unsatisfactory also, because it, too, is seen to be only another form of the vision of unrest. So this release is but transitory. The ultimate deliverance lies in the denial of the

will, and the path of denial is the path of asceticism. By stifling every desire, curtailing every longing, ceasing to will, one annihilates the will itself, and has the reward of pure nothingness.

Schopenhauer, then, answers the "Universal Riddle" by concluding it is not worth answering. By an examination of what makes up the riddle we find that pain is within man and the world, is their very nature, and that therefore they cannot hope to escape from it. It serves no end, leads to no outcome, is decreed for no reason, so we have the Schopenhauerian purposelessness. Nature is law-abiding, man is law-abiding, but for what reason, since there is no final law? As Höffding says, he has broken with "the fundamental presupposition of a harmony of existence on which western theology and philosophy had more or less decidedly always been based." X

To darken the picture more, Schopenhauer allows man little freedom except the freedom of the denial of the "will-to-live." Otherwise man has the position of a victim. He is the prey of his own characteristics which are largely determined for him, and he is the prey of the chances of nature. "Brute chance" Professor Royce calls it, recognizing with Schopenhauer its utterly irresponsible character. Sometimes it is so insidious as to seem designedly malignant, always it is capricious. In one of his minor essays, "The Art of Controversy," Schopenhauer thus expresses the complete irrationality of this force. "Consider that chance, which with error, its brother, and folly, its aunt, and malice, its grandmother, rules in this world; which every year and every day, by blows great and small, embitters the life of every son of earth, and yours too; consider, I say, that it is to this wicked power you owe your prosperity and independence; for it gave you what it refused to many thousands, just to be able to give it to individuals like you. Remembering all this, you will not behave as though you had a right to the possession of its gifts; but you will perceive what a capricious mistress it is that gives you her favours; and therefore when she takes it into her head to deprive you of some or all of them, you will not make a great fuss about her injustice; but you will recognize that what chance gave, chance has taken away."

The Schopenhauerian quarrel with existence, then, is a quarrel with its irrational and inharmonious character. We find a world where individuals exist by devouring other individuals, types by crowding out types; we find also a world where chance reigns, heaping up benefits and taking away necessities, irrespective of actual wants and deserts; sometimes refusing its aid at the psychological moment; again thrusting it in when the need is not there. The real pain of life is thus the pain of life as a whole. We feel this when we look beyond our own unhappy selves or beyond any tragic event; and see that all are but parts of this total undirected blindness. If we think of some Cause for this blindness, we can only scorn it; because such a Cause must be omnipotent; and being omnipotent, could have made something better a possibility.

Thomas Hardy's quarrel with existence is a quarrel with all that does exist and with what makes it exist. He quarrels with society because its code is unfair and takes no account of motives; he quarrels with nature because her laws are cruel; he quarrels with the Force back of nature because It has permitted such a state of things to be, when, being all-powerful, it could have decreed otherwise. In *The Dynasts* he presents this view in the picture of "A knitter drowsed, whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness." Man must take what is knitted off for him, by a knitter who does not once glance at his needs. Herein lies the pain. Who would not suffer for a good cause? But suffering for a knitter who is drowsed, suffering which may be absolutely unnecessary drives any one to melancholy and despair.

Emerson in his "Threnody" has voiced just the sense of personal unfairness that comes to all men, face to face with their first great sorrow:

"I had the right, few days ago,
Thy steps to watch, thy place to know;
How have I forfeited the right?"

Some men who question thus, go on until, like the poet, they find some solution in a purpose served by their woe, others forget their questions only in the press of daily life. It might

be said of Thomas Hardy that he is always facing such a question, and has neither of the accustomed modes of relief. He finds no acceptable evidence of any purpose that is subserved by the individual suffering; and because he is sensitive beyond most men, the press of life does not destroy the sharp pangs of the unreasonableness of such suffering.

A rather detailed study of the novels and poems of Hardy shows how profound and far-reaching is his conviction that the world we live in is an unreasonable and inharmonious one. Every person who loves the outdoors world at all must love the outdoors world of Hardy. Lionel Johnson says that he has what Hawthorne had, "a gift of sight into the spirit of a place; a most rare gift." Nowhere is this "gift of sight" more happily evident than in the opening chapter of *The Return of the Native*. Some one has said that Egdon Heath is the real hero of the book. As such it is a typical Hardy hero. "Gay prospects wed happily with gay times," says Hardy, "but alas! if times be not gay!" "Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct; to a more recently learned emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming." "The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the mournful sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain, will be all of nature that is absolutely consonant with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately to the commonest tourist spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle gardens of South Europe are to him now."

This "gift of sight" into the gloomy spirit of nature is well brought out in a passage in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in which Hardy has been describing a peaceful scene as a contrast to the turmoil of man. One might "abjure man as the blot on an otherwise kindly universe; till it was remembered that all terrestrial conditions were intermittent; and that mankind might some night be innocently sleeping when these quiet objects were raging loud."

In *Two on a Tower* our ordinary feeling that the sky is a thing of beauty, worthy of rapt contemplation, is rudely shaken. "The actual sky is a horror." It contains "things much more terrible than monsters of shape, namely, monsters of magnitude without human shape." The sky goes beyond the size at

This
cannot
be said
hero is
because
was the
power to
God in
the same
the sea
cannot
consider
the
protagon
in Shakespeare
"Rude is the
The sea"

which grandeur begins, beyond that of solemnity, even beyond that of awfulness, the stellar universe has the size at which ghastliness begins. The sky shows the sense of inevitable decay, too. It has its burnt out places. If you want to remain cheerful, avoid the study of astronomy. On the other hand, if you are depressed, it will help you, but in a rather negative way, by showing you that nothing is important.

Sometimes the Hardy nature dreads life just as the Hardy characters do. Marty South speaks of the newly planted trees sighing as if they dreaded to begin to live. Sometimes wild creatures seem to feel the tragedy of existence, as in *Tess* when the birds which come from the north and have seen "cataclysmal horrors" have tragic eyes. Sometimes subjectivism is more simply expressed, as in the poems, "The Seasons of the Year" and "The King's Experiment," where nature is grave or gay according to the mood of the observer. However, this open personification is less subtly convincing than the more indirect finding of the saddened latter-day mood of man in nature.

A simple feeling of gloom in nature analogous to the gloom of man is, after all, of trivial importance beside the sense of a lack of order in the outside world. This feeling is especially strong in *Jude* and *Tess*, and in the poems. Jude, after he has been whipped for allowing the birds to eat the grain, instead of scaring them away from it, perceives "the flaw in the terrestrial scheme by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener." "That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony." Again nature's law is said to be "mutual butchery," and "cruelty is the law pervading all nature and society; and we can't get out of it if we would!" In *Tess*, the Durbeyfield children are spoken of as a "half-dozen little captives under hatches" compelled to sail in the Durbeyfield ship; then the writer says, "Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is sweet and pure, gets his authority for speaking of 'Nature's holy plan.'" Tess and her little brother have been speaking of the stars being worlds, and Tess says, "They sometimes seem to be like the

apples on our stubborn tree, Most of them splendid and sound—a few blighted.” “Which do we live on,” asks the boy, “a splendid one or a blighted one?” “A blighted one.” “’Tis very unlucky we didn’t pitch on a sound one, when there were so many more of ’em!”

In a poem called “Nature’s Questioning” the various products of nature, pool, field and so forth are represented as having lost their first joy in being created, and as inquiring the reason for their existence. The burden of their complaint is that they are left to hazard and not to law. In “The Mother Mourns,” the Earth laments that man has found her out, she had never intended that he should advance to that point of keenness which would enable him to discover her flaws. In other poems she is represented as blind or asleep or utterly neglectful of her children. Perhaps the best summary of what Hardy means by the lack of order in nature and what Schopenhauer meant by the struggle of the will to obtain objectification is this passage in *The Woodlanders*: “Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigor of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling.” *where in god's name are*

Another unfairness in Nature is that she seems always to throw the weight of her approval on the side of man’s baser instincts, rather than on that of his nobler. In reading Schopenhauer, one has often a vague feeling that though the whole “state of nature” may not triumph over the “state of grace,” in any individual it is likely to prove the stronger. In Hardy this vague suggestion becomes concrete statement. In *Two on a Tower*, in *The Return of the Native*, in *Jude*, we have three examples of young men of the highest promise and loftiest aims who are swayed from their careers and crippled, the first temporarily, the two last for life, by the sudden cropping out of natural instincts which they are powerless to subordinate. “In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him—something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences which had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason *your footnote ??*

and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a school-boy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended toward the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality."

Women are more pitiable the victims of Nature's lack of sympathy with a "state of grace" than men. Who does not pity the three milkmaids with their hopeless, generous love for Angel Clare as we see them in the sleeping chamber whose air "seemed to palpitate with the hopeless passion of the girls. They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion which they had neither expected nor denied." Who can help feeling with Hardy that there is a flaw in Tess's guardian angel, that he ought to have told her Angel Clare was the man to make her happy, when she first saw him dancing on the green; and to have warned her that Alec D'Urberville would surely make her miserable. But Tess's narrator assures us that "the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See!' to a poor creature, when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here!' to a body's cry of 'Where?' till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game."

An unordered world of nature suggests its counterpart, an unordered world of man. This is the Hardy attitude toward history. It leads nowhere, is a mere monotonous recurrence of the same motives, the same causes, in varying times and places. Thus Tess does not care to learn what will only show her that she is one of a long row, that others have had her nature and done her deeds, and will do so again. She wouldn't mind learning why the sun shines on the just and the unjust alike; but that is what no books will tell her. Ethelberta, on the other hand, finds fortification in the past, but it is the same ironical aid to courage that Swithin St. Cleeve found in the study of astronomy, the individual insignificance is lost in the general insignificance.

In *The Dynasts* we find Hardy's reason why history presents this unsatisfactory character. History seems to be in the

hands of men, but in reality it is not, because the men themselves are in the hands of an "Immanent Will." The overthrow of dynasties, the clash of armies, the rise and fall of nations are but the struggles of the Will to find expression. And since the Will works unconsciously and even automatically, we have the same continuous results "click-clacked off;" but no hint of any one result to which these shall lead. Von Hartmann has this same view of a force back of the will of man which is really responsible. He calls it the "Unconscious Will," and one recognizes in it the "will-to-live" of Schopenhauer. The masses are moved by instinctive impulses, but it is seen later that they have been working out ideas of this unconscious will, though the motives they have presented to themselves are not these ideas at all. He sees in history a development and an evolution, which, like everything else in Von Hartmann, is the evolution from the unconscious to the conscious; but since the only result that he can predict when this total consciousness is attained, is that it will will annihilation, most of us will be inclined to agree with Tess that we do not need to intensify the picture of gloom by the study of history.

The feeling that the world of man is also unordered is shown in the lack of a vital belief in God. This is especially noticeable among the rustic characters of the Hardy novels, and it gives to their speech a subtly humorous flavor that will bear much repetition. "They say every man for himself; but, thank God, I'm not so mean as to lessen old fokes' chances by being earnest at my time o' life, and they so much nearer the need o't." "Well, sir, 'tis much as before wi' me. One hour a week wi' God A'mighty and the rest with the devil, as a chap may say." "But for a drunk of really a noble class that brought you no nearer to the dark man than you were afore you begun, there was none like those in Farmer Everdene's kitchen. Not a single damn allowed; no, not a bare poor one, even at the most cheerful moment when all were blindest, though the good old word of sin thrown in here and there at such times is a great relief to a merry soul. . . . Ay, poor Charlotte, I wonder if she had the good fortune to get into Heaven when 'a died! But 'a was never much in luck's way, and perhaps 'a went downwards after all, poor soul."

Sometimes the lack of a vital belief becomes an open doubt, " 'Well, well,' said Mrs. Leat, giving way, 'Whatever may be the truth on't, I trust Providence will settle it all for the best, as he always do.' " " 'Ay, ay, Elizabeth,' rejoined Mrs. Crickett with a satirical sigh, 'good people like you may say so, but I have always found Providence a different sort of feller.' " In *Desperate Remedies* again, Manston and the letter carrier hold a conversation about religion. Manston tells the carrier that the higher class of mind does not need to be religious, and that believing is all a mistake. " 'Well to be sure!' says the carrier. 'However believing in God is a mistake made by very few people after all!' " " 'Not one Christian in our parish would walk half a mile in a rain like this to know whether the Scripture had concluded him under sin or grace.' " " 'Ah, you may depend upon it they'll do away wi' Goddymity altogether, afore long, although we've had him over us so many years.' "

More commonly Providence is regarded as a thing to be taken into account, but not a thing to interfere with the more serious pursuits of life. There is a scene in *Far from the Madding Crowd* where the man who is driving the wagon containing poor Fanny Robin's body, goes into an ale-house and joins two companions. After they have decided that they ought to drink because all men haven't the gift of enjoying a soak, this deserting driver says, " 'Well, I hope Providence won't be in a way with me for my doings. I've been troubled with weak moments lately, 'tis true. I've been drinky once this month already, and I did not go to church A-Sunday, and I dropped a curse or two yesterday; so I don't want to go too far for my safety. Your next world is your next world, and not to be squandered offhand.' "

In *The Hand of Ethelberta* the clerk won't allow bad words to be said in the church. "As far as my personal self goes, I should have no objection to your cussing as much as you like, but as an official of the church my conscience won't allow it to be done." In *Jude* we have Arabella taking to chapel-going after her husband's death "as 'twas righter than gin;" and in several places we find reference to a special Sunday form of truth. Some one may say, "All this is true to

life." As a matter of fact we are prone to separate our Sunday morals from our week day ones, though we are not all so frank about acknowledging the division. But the fact that this frailty of human nature is true to life is rather a point in favor of its significance in a general purposeless view of life. Faith is lukewarm because there is nothing to make it hot.

From a merely formal belief in God to a sense that life is not worth living and will not bear examination is but a step. We sometimes wonder if there is a single Hardy character who, if he or she were challenged with the question, "Is life worth while?" would answer, "Yes." They are all like Eustacia Vye, they know too much unless they could know all. This is a characteristic of the earliest Hardy. Farmer Sprin-grove in *Desperate Remedies* is described as feeling with Walt Whitman, "I foresee too much, it means more than I thought." One of the things that he foresees is that his son Edward may never get on in the world, "all through his seeing too far into things—being discontented with makeshifts—thinking o' perfection in things, and then sickened that there's no such thing as perfection." Cytherea, the heroine, feels "almost ashamed to be seen walking such a world," and Manston, the villain, feels that it is necessary to be honest because nothing can be achieved by stratagem in a world whose materials are such as he sees.

Even in his professedly lighter novels the futility of life intrudes upon Hardy. Ethelberta wishes she were in a quiet grave, and well out of this world; and laments that God Almighty did not kill off three-fourths of the Chickerel family. Ten children is a hopeless number. Joey remarks with the proud cynicism of extreme youth, "The world's a holler mockery—that's what I say." Picotee, who knows, retorts, "Yes, so it is, to some, but not to you." So, too, Christopher has to the full that attitude of resignation which is the outcome of gray views of life.

In the four books where the tragedy is most intense, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Return of the Native*, *Tess* and *Jude*, this feeling of the barrenness of life, and of the evil plight of man in being alive attains its culmination. We might expect a man of violent extremes like the Mayor of Caster-

bridge to have black moods in which he would, like Job, curse the day wherein he was born; but we would scarcely anticipate that the gentle Elizabeth should appraise life at a moderate value. Yet she is first attracted to Farfrae because he feels as she does about life, that "though one could be gay on occasion, moments of gaiety were interludes, and no part of the actual drama."⁷ When she is watching her mother through the nights of illness the "subtle-souled girl" is "asking herself why she was born, why sitting in a room and blinking at the candle; why things around her had taken the shape they wore in preference to every other possible shape. Why they stared at her so helplessly as if waiting for the touch of some wand that should release them from terrestrial constraint; what that chaos called consciousness, which spun in her at this moment like a top, tended to, and began in." Even after her bark has come into smooth water, she is not exuberantly happy, for she seems to feel still that happiness is "but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."

Both Eustacia Vye and Clym Yeobright have reached this point before their marriage. Eustacia idealizes Wildeve because she has arrived "at that stage of enlightenment which feels that nothing is worth while," and must fill up her spare hours. She tells Clym that she joins the mummers to get excitement because life depresses her. He, in his turn, has reached "the stage in a young man's life where the grimness of the general human situation first becomes clear, and the realization of this causes ambition to halt awhile."

Tess is wholly convinced that it would have been better never to have been born. "Sheer experience had already taught her that, in some circumstances, there was one thing better than to lead a good life, and that was to be saved from leading any life whatever." "To her and her like, birth itself was an ordeal of degrading personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result seemed to justify, and at best could only palliate." One relief Tess has, the same that Schopenhauer saw in a contemplation of the beautiful, and the sublime in nature. She can for the moment, pass out of herself. "She knew how to hit to a hair's breadth that moment of evening when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced

that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty. It is then that the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimension." Relief comes in forgetting existence; when you remember it, when you see how "brute chance" rules the world, and the desired always comes after its value has departed, then you stand like Angel Clare and Tess, face to face after all their misfortunes and mistakes, but with the spectre of Alec between them, and implore something to shelter you from reality.

But it is in *Jude* that the desire not to live reaches the awful. Little Time, a cousin of that symbolic child Pearl, in *The Scarlet Letter*, never enjoys anything. "I am very, very sorry, father and mother. But please don't mind! I can't help it. I should like the flowers very, very much if I didn't keep on thinking they'd be all withered in a few days!" When his father and mother have had trouble to get a lodging, he says, "It would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it?" and again, "If children make so much trouble, why do people have 'em?" Finally when the poor little fellow has put an end to his questionings, Jude says of him, "It was in his nature to do it. The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us in the last generation,—the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live."

The sense of satiety that was so strong in Schopenhauer is equally pronounced in Hardy. His characters are often conscious of their own perversity in despising what they have and wanting what they have not. Some of them even guard against this frailty by resorting to self-trickery. Eustacia Vye, cast by a capricious fate upon a heath where her charms are lost, is too conscious of the double tragedy in man, that he ever longs for what is beyond his reach, and quickly learns to scorn what he possesses. When Wildevve shows the independence of loving another, she does all in her power to win him back, summing up her feelings in this wise: "Indeed, I think I like you to desert me a little once now and then. Love is the dismalest thing, where the lover is quite honest. Oh, it is a shame

to say so, but it is true!" When on the other hand she realizes that Wildeva can belong to her, that the other woman no longer wants him, her passion for him is gone. "The sentiment which lurks more or less in all inanimate nature—that of not desiring the undesired of others—was lively as a passion in the super-subtle, epicurean heart of Eustacia."

Eustacia is not alone in her preference for the unattainable. Ethelberta knows well how to apply this psychological fact to the practical art of keeping a man a lover. It is an instinct which she shares with many a woman in real life who has learned how to turn the human fickleness to her own advantage. But the arts of all women in hoodwinking the god of fickleness are put to shame by the ingenuous device of the husband in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, who, finding that he was tiring of his wife, took off her ring and called her by her maiden name, and "as soon as he could thoroughly fancy he was doing wrong and committing the seventh, 'a got to like her as well as ever, and they lived on a perfect picture of mutual love.'"

The idea of the decay of love is a favorite theme with Hardy. The Wessex Poems have many hints of it, the novels have many frank statements of this change tucked away in them. *The Well-Beloved* is an idealization of fickleness, and *Jude* is so clear and open a statement as to seem brutal. Many men beside Thomas Hardy have realized that absolute constancy in deed, in thought and in spirit between man and woman, or even between friends of the same sex, is a sheer impossibility. Ibsen showed us one solution in *Love's Comedy*, Hardy gives us another in *Jude*. And both of them bear the onus of having ruthlessly dragged to light a lurking problem we would fain forget.

The nature in man decrees that he shall lightly value what he has and desire what he does not own. The "brute chance" outside of him adds this bitter drop that so long as he desires he seldom attains, but when he has ceased from wishing, the once coveted is often given to him. So Christopher tells Ethelberta, who has remarked that at the bottom of her heart she doesn't care whether she succeeds or not, "For that very reason you are likely to do it. My idea is, make ambition your busi-

ness and indifference your relaxation, and you will fail; but make indifference your business and ambition your relaxation, and you will succeed. So impish are the ways of the gods." To realize how deep-imbedded is this instinct, we have only to reflect how often we shrink from revealing our real desires or how we pretend that we have others, just because we are afraid that the very whisper of them will attract ill-luck to them. "A fancy some people hold, when in a bitter mood," says Hardy in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, "is that inexorable circumstance only tries to prevent what intelligence attempts. Renounce a desire for a long-contested position, and go on another tack, and after awhile the prize is thrown at you, seemingly in disappointment that no more tantalizing is possible."

This is akin to the philosophy of renunciation taught Elizabeth Jane by a checkered life. For she is of the stern stuff that will not speak in favor of compensation. She can resign herself, she can bow to the inevitable, but she will never admit that what has been given her is better than what she sought. "Yet her experience had consisted less in a series of pure disappointments than in a series of substitutions. Continually it had happened that what she had desired had not been granted her, and what had been granted her she had not desired. So she viewed with an approach to equanimity the now cancelled days when Donald had been her undeclared lover, and wondered what unwished for thing Heaven might send her in place of him."

The reason that a man like Hardy can not be lightly set aside, as those who wish to preserve the illusion that the world is wholly fair, would counsel, is that his most gloomy utterances find an echo in our daily experiences. Very probably we consider it wise to ignore these facts, or to give them a different explanation, but we must admit they are there, and are no figments of a pessimistic imagination. Ethelberta's butler father read human nature truly. "People always want what's kept from them, and don't value what's given." Tess is true to the general attitude of regarding evil as the natural lot of mankind, and expecting bad luck even in trivial affairs, when she says, "All this good fortune may be scourged out o' me afterwards by a lot of ill. That's how God mostly does."

The hero of the *Laodicean*, too, trembles at one time because the course of his love seems to run too smoothly. But it is in *The Hand of Ethelberta* that this feeling finds true ironical expression: "At the most propitious moment the distance to the possibility of sorrow is so short that a man's spirits must not rise higher than mere cheerfulness out of bare respect to his insight."

Maeterlinck in recognizing this freak of destiny suggests three ways of accepting it. The Roman, Paulus Æmilius, who has lost his sons at the moment of a great victory is glad that the arrows of fate are directed against him rather than against the state, for some one must bear the brunt of an inconstant fortune. Job would have said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Marcus Aurelius would perhaps have argued that as he was no longer allowed to love those whom he wished to love, he must learn to love those whom he did not love as yet. It is needless to say that none of these solutions would satisfy Hardy. Why should fortune be inconstant? Why should the Lord take away what he gives? Why is there not some other way to teach me to love all men? This is just another aspect of the caprice that rules the world. The butler philosopher Chickereel sums up all we know: "I never believe in anything that comes in the shape of a wonderful luck. As it comes, so it goes."

The idea that chance rules, that caprice is everywhere, that the "inherent will to enjoy" and the "circumstantial will against enjoyment" are ever in conflict lies at the bottom of Hardy's philosophy. One would expect, therefore, to find many direct and definite statements of purposelessness. It is neither possible nor necessary to quote all the passages which are deeply tinged with Hardy's view that the world is governed by a blind force. There are two in *The Return of the Native* which are sufficiently characteristic to stand as delegates for the others. "Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a faultless goddess, that is, those which make not quite a faultless woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spin-

dle, and the shears at her own free-will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favors here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious interchange of caresses and blows, as those we endure now." "He did sometimes think he had been ill used by fortune so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance with glory, they should calculate how to retreat without shame. But that he and his had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled in having such irons thrust into their souls he did not maintain long. It is usually so, except with the sternest of men. The placable human race, in its generous endeavor to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a first cause, has always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower moral quality than its own; and, even while it sits down and weeps by the waters of Babylon, invents excuses for the oppressor which prompts its tears."

Mr. Archer in his *Real Conversations* quotes a saying of Hardy: "What are my books but one plea against 'man's inhumanity to man'—to woman—and to the lower animals?" He goes on to take the position that Maeterlinck takes in *Le Temple Enseveli* that it is time enough to talk of inherent injustice, when we have done away with the injustice of men. Nevertheless one feels inclined to answer Hardy's question and say that his books are also a statement of God's inhumanity to man. It is true that we feel to our innermost depths the arraignment of man-made conventions in *Tess* and *Jude*, and in lesser fashion in many of the other novels and poems. Conventions and general opinions seem always to take the obvious, and to leave not even a corner for the more subtle truths. Therefore these neglected verities become the discovery of artist after artist, and slowly, oh how slowly, are forced upon public opinion. Thus we see Hardy recognizing in *Tess* a truth that Hawthorne formulated in *The Marble Faun*, that spiritual and mental growth can come through sin as well as through innocence; that all that is necessary is that the spirit be startled into life, and that it matters not what startles it. He sees, too, another oft-neglected truth, that blackness of sin depends upon the motive, not upon the result. In "The Dance

at the Phoenix" he turns the light upon another spectre which ought to teach us charity but is too seldom owned by society, that we do not know what is latent in us.

If this were all of Hardy's message, there would be nothing to separate him from Ibsen, from Pinero, Jones, and Shaw and a host of others who lay bare social inconsistencies; and certainly nothing to connect his name with that of Schopenhauer. It has been said that from his earliest book *Desperate Remedies* published in 1870 to his most recent *The Dynasts* there runs an "ever increasing passion in the doubt or denial of the goodness of God." At the bottom of the gloominess Hardy so often finds in nature, of the cruelty of her laws, of her sympathy with man's more ignoble aims, at the bottom of man's restlessness, of his wish he had never been born, of his indifference to a history that tells only of pain and unfulfilled intentions, of his indifference to religion; at the bottom of his expectation of ill, and his general sense of the unexplained and undemanded existence of evil, there is always the thought of uselessness. (If we knew any one profited, even if we knew that some vengeful god were full of mirth at our misery, we could grimly endure; but all that we can discover from the facts of the case is that some power which is either blind, or automatic, or both, has set in motion a world whose basic note is pain. No one can question the omnipotence of such a power, but of its benevolence what can be said?

Schopenhauer says it is not benevolent. There is no harmony in existence. It is the frank statement of this lack of harmony that makes him a new note in occidental philosophy. Hardy is equally outspoken through the medium of novel, poem and play. There is no reason why. Things are simply unarranged and unreasonable. The two men are not entirely alike in the details of their problem, not at all alike in their solution, they are alike in starting from the same basis, the basis of utter purposelessness. It might be possible to parallel many a passage in Schopenhauer, with a like one in Hardy. Such a process is neither entertaining nor entirely trustworthy. It savors too much of seeing what we want to see. But without unduly stretching the material to fit the theory, it is possible to say that they are alike in the spirit which drives them to utterance.

CHAPTER III.

EFFECT OF PURPOSELESSNESS: TRAGEDY.

If Schopenhauer and Hardy have departed from the general run of men in regarding the whole of life as purposeless, what effect will this have upon their view of life as we see it in events and actions? Obviously there will be a change of values. What seems important to men who see each deed and each occurrence as parts of a purposive whole, may seem worthless to them. Nowhere will this shifting of values be so evident as in a consideration of what they regard as tragic. So the three questions of what is the more usual view of tragedy, what constitutes a tragedy for Schopenhauer, what is used as a tragedy by Hardy become all-important.

The essence of tragedy is conflict. The old definition that tragedy represents the triumph of the universal over the particular still suffices, although we have many times changed the meaning of universal. If we give to it the meaning we have found in Schopenhauer and Hardy, then the universal is a blind irrationality for which no laws can be given, no predictions made. It will strike where it will strike, here with dire results, there with good. It is of course the dire results which concern us. Obviously the particular who encounters this universal will be an object of pity, not one of blame. Indeed there is no tragedy in what our writers would call the deeper sense of the word, as long as the individual is able to help himself. Tragedy enters only when the individual has reached the limit of his power of resistance to evil, and is blameless. Thus, in this tragedy the universal takes things into its own hands, whereas in the other the individual took the initiative. Pity of a certain sort one always had for the individual, but it was the pity for those who make mistakes, the pity for the sinner; now it is the pity for those who are sinned against. Like our pity, our terror has changed its nature. Formerly it was definite, we feared the rewards and punishments which would surely follow; now we scarcely know what we fear, we call it the lack of

justice. Like the new pity this terror has the tinge of ironic bitterness. As we can no longer blame the individual, and as we must have one side right or wrong to produce a conflict, we transfer our protest to the universal. And it is in the sense that we know nothing of the morality of this universal, and from what we see can only conclude it is less high than our own, that the full poignancy of this tragedy is felt.

With the Greeks, the more usual form of tragedy prevailed. Man was in conflict with Fate, but it was an optimistic conflict, because Fate was law-abiding. Among themselves the gods had laws, it was when man came into opposition with these that he fell into tragedy. Men recognized that they were victims of Chance, but they did not think of her as powerless and blind. W. L. Courtney in some essays on *The Idea of Tragedy* says that originally the Greeks, like the Hebrews, thought of their gods as jealous of human happiness, and of fate as something inexorable and rigid, which made men its sport; but that Æschylus, realizing that these views would interfere with the dramatic interest, modified them. His fate is not the implacable thing, Adrasteia, but Nemesis, the apportioner, the power which allots to every man according to his deserts. Man excites the ire of the gods, not their jealousy. We know, too, that Aristotle did not recognize as a true tragic hero the good man who came from prosperity into adversity. His true hero must contain within him a mixture of good and bad.

In the great era of Elizabethan tragedy God takes the place of Fate. His decrees or the general moral sense of men forms the universal, the individual Lear or Tamburlaine who puts himself into antagonism with these decrees must bear the penalty. Fate, however, is enthroned within man rather than on some high point without. Both the particular will which is rebelling, and the universal moral laws which must triumph are within the same man. He helps form the universal, he does not find it ready formed as in the old Grecian days. Hamlet's tragedy takes place within his own soul.

In our own day tragedy like everything else, seems complex and many-sided. With the growing belief that all criteria of right and wrong are within man and not in some god

without, there has been an intensification of the struggle within the individual. Two opposing forces meet in the same person, one may be the conventional sense of right, one a more fundamental instinct, as in Ibsen's *The Doll's House*: or one may be the narrow selfish side of a man, the other his wider, freer self, as in *The Master Builder*. This has drawn tragedy to realism, because it is in everyday humdrum life that we find these struggles the fiercest. There is also a tragedy that has taken the form of symbolism as in Maeterlinck's *The Blind*, *Joyzelle*, and *The Seven Princesses*. And there is another view of tragedy which is not distinct from the tragedy of realism or that of symbolism, but is distinct from the Grecian idea of Nemesis and the Elizabethan idea of the surety of the moral triumph. This view is that in the majority of cases the good are rewarded and the wicked punished, but that there are exceptions where the just man suffers and the wicked man goes scot free, and that these exceptions form a special and particular kind of tragedy. Aristotle's true tragic hero is no longer the only hero, he has had to admit into the arena the Job-like man who has fallen from prosperity into adversity.

All three of these elements of tragedy enter into Hardy. He is the realist who finds his tragedies in his own Wessex and among the problems that press upon us to-day. He may often wish that he had lived in the Middle Ages when belief was everywhere prevalent and doubts had not arisen, but he cannot humor himself with the relief of living imaginatively in such a time. He is no shirker, and he must face the unpleasant to-day with only a lingering wish that he could have had his lot cast in a happier and less strenuous time. Symbolism on the whole finds little place in his work. He is usually matter-of-fact and direct in telling what he means; but, aside from the symbolic use which he often makes of nature, there is in *The Dynasts* the double set of antagonists, the aggressing Napoleon and the righteous defenders of the peace of Europe, and back of them the impotence of man and the compelling force of the Immanent Will. As to dealing with the exceptional man who receives more than he merits, it is true that Hardy does that, but the vital point is whether he would admit that they were very exceptional; or granted that they are, whether

one exception would not prove the point against purposiveness as well as a majority of cases.

People to-day do not doubt that we can undeservedly suffer. Maeterlinck, who is the best and deepest kind of an optimist, says, "I do not pretend that destiny is just, that it rewards the good and punishes the wicked," and in *Le Temple Enseveli*, he shows that there is grossest injustice in visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, since no account is taken of the motive that caused the sin, and a disease contracted in an act of heroism may be transmitted as quickly as one caught in a selfish career of vice. But most people are not willing to go as far as Schopenhauer and say that life in itself is the worst form of undeserved suffering. In a sense the world's greatest tragedies, though not always its greatest dramas, are those in which the victim is clearly in the right, or those in which both sides think they are right. The great dramas of Christ and of Prometheus are of the first order; all religious persecutions, all civil wars like our own great Rebellion and the Revolution of 1789 in France are of the second. In both these cases, you have men who are willing to die for the right they see, who triumph even in their defeat, because they represent the universal. But the Schopenhauerian hero does not die because he finds something worth dying for, but because he finds "nothing worth living for." What life would teach all men if they had ears to hear, the victim of tragedy is forced to learn. More quickly than his brethren he comes to the realization that all is futile in a world constructed like this one.

Tragedy, says Schopenhauer, is to be regarded as the summit of poetical art. It is significant that this highest poetical achievement represents the terrible side of life. "The unspeakable pain, the wail of humanity, the triumph of evil, the scornful mastery of chance, and the irretrievable fall of the just and innocent" are all the subject matter of tragedy. At last the noblest men, purified by suffering, renounce the ends they have striven for, and renounce the pleasures of life. They have learned their lesson of the nature of the world, and the futility of striving against it. "The demand for so-called poetical justice," continues Schopenhauer, "rests on entire

misconception of the nature of tragedy, and, indeed, of the nature of the world itself." He asks in what Ophelia, Desdemona and Cordelia have offended. "The true sense of tragedy is the deeper insight that it is not his own individual sins that the hero atones for, but original sin, that is, the crime of existence itself; 'for the greatest crime of man is that he was born'; as Calderon expresses it."

Schopenhauer distinguishes three kinds of tragedy. Those that deal with a character of extraordinary wickedness, such as Iago, or Richard III; those which portray blind fate, chance, and error, as the "Ædipus Rex" of Sophocles, and last and nearest to us, those that are brought about by simple juxtaposition of ordinary characters. No one is specially to blame; trifling accidents, innocent acts bring about great entanglements. In *The Woodlanders* Giles Winterborne refuses to turn his heavily loaded team out of the road for the passage of the haughty Felice Charmond. This sows in her mind the prejudice that makes her refuse to allow Giles to renew his right to the houses, a right lost by the merest chance. This refusal causes him to lose Grace, and in the end causes Felice to lose Dr. Fitzpiers, because he has married Grace. Such a chain of incidents conveys the force of Schopenhauer's remark that this kind of tragedy is so near and horrible and sinister as to make us feel ourselves already in the midst of hell.

Schopenhauer, then, would not for a moment admit that the man who failed to be rewarded or punished according to his deserts was exceptional. A lack of poetic justice is a necessary correlative of a world composed of irrational will and its manifestations; but the truly tragic lies in the general recognition of the lack of justice in life as a whole, and not in any given case. This idea that it is only the pain of all life and not any individual pain which is tragic, is a favorite one with Schopenhauer, and is repeated in many of his minor essays. The given case is important only because it shows the nature of every case. The entire trend of life is tragic. We see merely in the glare of the search-light what we could see anywhere.

Our first cursory thought about Thomas Hardy is that he has gone back to the Greek idea of tragedy. Man and

Fate seem pitted against each other, and Fate is the stronger. There is the closing sentence in *Tess* to confirm this idea. "‘Justice’ was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Æschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess." But as we have seen in "Hap" man is not even so dignified as to be the sport of the gods, he is an utterly useless factor in a blind scheme. So a second thought tells us that nothing ever recurs in exactly the same form. Life is like the river of Heraclitus, and we cannot step twice into the same stream. If Hardy and other writers of our time center their dramas about destiny we may be very sure it will not be the same Destiny who dwelt with the Greeks.

Maeterlinck in discussing the fact that the drama of to-day has turned to the regions of psychology and of moral problems, says, "There is no longer a God to widen, or master, the action; nor is there an inexorable fate to form a mysterious, solemn and tragical background for the slightest gesture of man." "There still abides with us, it is true, a terrible unknown." This unknown he finds within man and Hardy without man. That seems to be in reality, the sole kinship between the latter's idea of destiny and that of the Greeks, that the two opposing forces are man and a power outside him. This fact that Hardy is an innovator, that he has reversed the traditions of tragedy both in our drama and in our novel is, perhaps, best understood by a comparison of three dramatic productions which have the same theme, the suffering of the innocent.

In *Antigone*, the *Duchess of Malfi*, and *Tess*, we have three women who did not merit the accumulation of horrors that came to them. Fortune was most unjust to each of the three, with that worst kind of injustice which takes no account of the spirit and motives of the victims. For these women were all innocent with the deepest innocence, the pureness of heart that not only shall see God, but does see Him. They are among those who most wring our hearts, the unfortunate, the ill-fated ones who draw misfortune to them as the magnet draws the iron. But in the nature of the fate that overtook them, there is the most essential, the most vital distinction.

Their doom was unwarranted by their deeds, it was

lacking in all higher justice; yet Antigone and the Duchess had a hand in their fate. They chose their course, pitted themselves against destiny, went into the conflict with their eyes open; whereas Tess was an unsuspecting victim, seized in her innocence by malicious circumstances. Never did she dare fate, never did she have the satisfaction of fighting, even in a losing cause. Antigone knew when she chose to bury her brother, that she chose her own doom. She knew she transgressed the law of the ruler of the state; she preferred to be true to the law of the gods. Perhaps she expected a miracle, that Creon would relent, or the gods she served would intervene; but she knew what could happen, and what would most probably come to pass, and she advanced open-eyed and courageous to her doom. The Duchess, too, chose openly. She knew when she made offers of marriage to Antonio that she invoked the sure enmity of her brothers, and took not only her own life, but that of her lover in her hands. Tess is the victim of a shiftless family, who prey upon her sensibilities, and drive her forth to the house of her rich relations where her fate lies in wait for her. Of course she could have resisted her fate. Tess has her weaknesses. Her power of resistance is not adamant. If it were not for this weak side in her, she would deserve the criticism Lionel Johnson makes of her, that she is so blameless as to be uninteresting. It is the feeling that though ninety-nine girls with Tess's heredity, her environment, and her temptations would have yielded as she yielded, there might have been one who would have seen the way of avoidance of all these difficulties, which makes her lot so tragic. Tess's exceptionalness consists not in wise foresight, but in another virtue; she can pass through sin and degradation and come out undefiled.

It may be said that Tess transgressed a law of society, as the Duchess a conventional law and Antigone one of the state, and that each simply met with the penalty of her transgression; but it was never given to Tess to choose whether she would transgress or not. She did not risk defiance of a social code for the sake of something dearer in the shape of pleasure or duty, as these two did, or as Monna Vanna did. Her tragedy fell upon her with no invitation from herself,

and brought no compensation. So our pity for Antigone and for the Duchess is tempered with a kind of glory in their daring, our pity for Tess has no alleviation. They are conquerors, they are subdued, but triumphant; Tess is a victim, she is crushed.

Antigone, indeed, is among our grandly heroic figures. Maeterlinck classes her among the sages, and calls her drama the drama of wisdom, of which there are few examples in the world. For Antigone defied bad fortune for the sake of a duty, she was the sacrifice to all she held to be holy and inviolable in a sister's relation to a brother. Where the Duchess ventured all for the sake of her own love and happiness, Antigone yielded even her love and happiness to the call of the highest in her. "Thy choice was to live; mine to die," says she to her sister. "One world approved thy wisdom; another, mine." There is all that is glorious, and nothing that is hopeless in the fate of Antigone, for it was given to her to find something that was worth dying for. The Duchess, too, though the path of noble self-sacrifice is not her lot, dies like a Duchess, full of pride, dignity and a willingness to pay for the happiness she has bought. But Tess dies an ignoble death after a few paltry days of happiness with Angel Clare, days for which she has paid again and again in former agonies of sorrow. She dies gladly because it is better to go before she awakes from her dream, before Angel learns to despise her. Never has death seemed repulsive, but life has always sung in her ears the refrain, "It would be better not to be born." How truly might it be said of her that she found "nothing worth living for!"

It is in them all to question the decrees of the gods. They know that their fate is undeserved, and being one and all women of spirit, they must ask why it should come to them. Antigone and Tess have a right to a more subtle form of questioning than the Duchess, who has only her own misery to account for, whose woes start with herself. The others may indeed ask why they should be involved in the deeds of their forefathers? Why the descendants of *Œdipus* should perish for his unwitting sins, and why this daughter of the house of D'Urberville should be cursed with their weak-

nesses are questions for the high gods of justice. Antigone questions like a Greek. We cannot avoid the decrees of fate, we cannot explain them, we must simply submit to them. Inexorable and inscrutable are the ways of the gods. "And what law of heaven have I transgressed? Why, hapless one, should I look to the gods any more,—what ally should I invoke,—when by piety I have earned the name of impious? Nay, then, if these things are pleasing to the gods, when I have suffered my doom, I shall come to know my sin; but if the sin is with my judges, I could wish them no fuller measure of evil than they, on their part, mete wrongfully to me." The Duchess of Malfi is even more submissive:

"Must I, like to a slave-born Russian,
Account it praise to suffer tyranny?
And yet, O heaven, thy heavy hand is in't!
I have seen my little boy oft scourge his top
And compared myself to't: naught made me e'er
Go right but heaven's scourge-stick."

And though she learns to curse the stars, and the world to its first chaos, she never rebels against the general injustice that could allow such a life as hers to be so maimed. Tess, however, does see her tragedy as part of a whole world of suffering, and not as an isolated case. She has compassion on the wounded birds after her sorrowful night in the wood, because they are in worse plight than herself, since she is whole. She feels her general insignificance, that she is of no more consequence than a fly; she sees the unfairness of her situation, that it has not been in her power—"nor is it in anybody's power—to feel the whole truth of golden opinions when it is possible to profit by them"; and she realizes that she has not merited her judgment. "Never in her life—she could swear it from the bottom of her soul—had she intended to do wrong; yet these hard judgments had come. Whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence, and why should she have been punished so persistently?" She has learned that there is an element in the world with which we can not reckon, because it is not law-abiding, as we are law-abiding. "Brute chance" met her, and "brute chance" won.

W. L. Cross, in his *Development of the English Novel*, has this to say of Thomas Hardy: "Tess of the D'Urbervilles, his mightiest production, is a tragedy that at no period in our history other than these *fin de siècle* days could have been written; or, if written, could have been understood." The reason for such a statement is that in this novel, as in so many of his others, we get the conflicts that are not "significant," and perhaps never before in the western world, were we so bold in challenging their insignificance. (Professor Royce, in his *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, has pointed out the distinction between tragedies that are significant and those that are not, and has admirably summed up just the side of life the Hardy novels show. "The worst tragedy of the world is the tragedy of the brute chance to which everything spiritual seems to be subject among us—the tragedy of the diabolical irrationality of so many among the foes of whatever is significant. An open enemy you can face. The temptation to do evil is indeed a necessity for spirituality. But one's own foolishness, one's ignorance, the cruel accidents of disease, the fatal misunderstandings that part friends and lovers, the chance mistakes that wreck nations:—these things we lament most bitterly, not because they are painful, but because they are farcical, distracting—not foemen worthy of the sword of the spirit, nor yet mere pangs of our finitude that we can easily learn to face courageously, as one can be indifferent to physical pain. No, these things do not make life merely painful to us; they make it hideously petty. They are like the "mean knights" that beat down Launcelot during his hopeless wandering in search of the Grail."

These insignificant conflicts, then, these intrusions of the mechanical world into the world of spirit, these blind irrationalities, are "the door to which Thomas Hardy finds no key." With this admission, there throng about us a whole host of unanswered questions. Does he mean that this is a general condition of life or an occasional one? Does he consistently present this view? Does he do it from artistic motives or from those of belief? Is he true to life in so emphasizing one side of it? Is there some obvious solution to such seeming ironies, which he fails to perceive?

Mr. Hardy so definitely says, in the *Real Conversations*, reported by Mr. William Archer, that it is better not to be born, and that life is incomplete and grotesque, "bounded, circumscribed, cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," that it is evident he regards all life as a tragedy. If life in itself is tragic, then the particular tragedy is not different in substance from the others, it only happens to be more dramatic. There is just a hint of humanitarian feeling here. We no longer look upon our lives as exceptional or individual things, but as parts of a great whole. More and more to-day are we coming to say and to think, even if we do not live up to it, that all men are brothers. Schopenhauer's system included the whole world under the self. If all mankind are linked together by suffering, then my suffering is typical, but not peculiar. Elizabeth Jane, when she had reached a position where lighter-natured girls would have been happy, remains merely tranquil. "But her strong sense that neither she nor any human being deserved less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more. And in being forced to class herself among the fortunate she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen, when the one to whom such unbroken tranquillity had been accorded in the adult stage was she whose youth had seemed to teach that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."

But even if the one case were peculiar and unusual, the charge of irrationality is still maintained. If the one perfectly innocent and righteous person can meet with the calamities that overtook Tess, or the petty hardships that came to Elizabeth Jane, then the law of justice needs revision. A hundred cases will not make the need more apparent, because we can see no reason why this law, which has the possibility of perfection should err. Omnipotence and Benevolence surely have the ability to create a world without error and unfairness, yet every day shows us error and unfairness. Herein lies our tragedy. Maeterlinck takes as the theme of one of his essays that moment when the civilized world watches the issue between Edward VII of England and the destiny that threatens to rob him of life at the very moment when he has

attained, presumably, his heart's desire. He calls it, "the essential tragedy of man, of the universal and perpetual drama enacted between his feeble will and the enormous unknown force that encompasses him." This particular instance is typical of the drama which has unfolded itself every day since life first began, and it gives us a chance to compare our different ways of viewing it. Some saw in it an incensed Providence chastising the pride of man. "But," says Maeterlinck, in words which Hardy might have used, "why does this God, more perfect than men, ask of us what a perfect man would not ask?" Others saw in it the wretchedness and insignificance of man. He himself saw the victory of science, one more certainty was added to the sum of certainties in the world, one more point was wrested from the unknown. The imperfect world and the perfect God, there is the irreconcilable paradox. And it makes no difference whether an incident like that of Edward VII is unique and exceptional, or whether they have been of daily occurrence since the world first came into existence; the paradox is apparent in either case.

So it is the ironic side of life that Hardy deals with. Evolution has been no easy doctrine for any one. Nature's grandiose methods, her prodigality, her absolute carelessness of the individual depress the individual, man. Man's indifference to other men, his lack of charity to his kind, add to that impression. We look beyond man and nature for some guardian angel who shall recompense us with some strength or some faith, and there is nothing that can satisfy our reason. All the proofs point to a power which takes no account of us. This is so hard and bitter a truth; it is so incomprehensible that a God-loving man should not find a man-loving God, that men have not faced it. Here is a man who does face it, who devotes all his art to showing this most seamy side of life. The "joy of life" which intoxicated the world of Elizabeth is a thing unknown to the world of Thomas Hardy. At the most you will have pleasurable episodes, moderate tranquillity, an occasional giddy hour of forgetfulness. The things that come to us when our first fresh desire for them has become stale, the things that we must renounce, the things we should have and do not get, the things we do get and should

not have, these will be the themes of our writer. A typical illustration is the collection of short stories called "Life's Little Ironies." There is not one person in the series of tales that gets what he wants, yet not one who wants anything that is unreasonable, and not one who misses his happiness by any plotted wickedness or villainy. A few mistakes, a blunder or two, and lives are spoiled. If happiness were far off, if these characters never glimpsed it, there would be no ground of complaint; but they ~~one~~ and all see it; one and all miss it. The merest trifling change and all would be so different, and therein lies the irony.

There are two ways of realizing that Hardy gives us the character of defeat, rather than the character of victory; the man who endures, rather than the man who triumphs, either with an inner or an outer triumph. If we look through the titles of his novels for those that are satisfactory in the sense in which a Dickens novel is satisfactory, where the neglected and deserving ones are rewarded and the bad ones are discovered and punished, and the world is ruled as we like to see it ruled, only three can by any possibility occur to us, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Trumpet Major*, and *A Laodicean*. Of these three *The Trumpet Major* gives only momentary gratification. To be sure one does lay it down with that feeling of being soothed and refreshed which is altogether pleasing in these days of the problem play and the problem novel, but that is because of its idyllic charm, a charm unbroken by any digression into the fields of gloomy speculation. A moment's reflection, however, shows us the grim spectre of irony in the background. It is summed up in the words of Anne. "No one loves me so well as you, John; nobody in the world is so worthy to be loved; and yet I cannot anyhow love you rightly." Bob is not worthy of Anne, John is too worthy; yet it is the fickle Bob who wins her, the faithful John who wins death.

Under the Greenwood Tree just faintly suggests an ironic condition. Dick wonders at the prosaicness of his father and mother, and reflects that all the fathers and mothers he knows have the same unromantic kind of love; yet in marrying Fancy, who has more than the usual girlish taste for "fixings"

and the little refinements of life, and who has once been faithless to him because of this liking, he runs a risk of as great a prosaicism and perhaps a less contented one, as any father and mother in Mellstock. Paula, the Laodicean, learns to separate the gold from the tinsel, and truly respects and honors Somerset, yet she can wish he were a De Stancy with all the romantic interest that attaches to that old family, which she sees decaying and passing away as all things must pass away.

The other novels do not leave us with any sense of a world ruled as we would like to have it ruled. *Tess* and *Jude* are among the hardest books to read, and to reread them calls for a genuine act of courage. They create in us the feeling which life often gives us, that we must interfere to set things right; that surely we would not muddle them, as they are now muddled. *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native* are those worst of tragedies, the tragedies of mistakes, of little deficiencies of firmness or of foresight that bring such disproportionate effects. *Two on a Tower* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are of the same nature, but less convincingly effective. *The Hand of Ethelberta* and *The Well Beloved*, which are designedly lighter in tone, leave their tang of bitterness. Circumstances far too often force the Ethelbertas to desert their better selves, and the vagueness and whimsicality of their desires far too often keep the Pierstons from genuine happiness. *Far from the Madding Crowd* vibrates between the idyllic charms of sheep shearing and agricultural suppers, and the irony of hopeless passions like that of Boldwood and the quiet sufferings of Gabriel Oak.

There is another phase of the general irony of life which interests Hardy. It is the rather dark psychological problems which often fascinated Hawthorne. Among the Wessex Poems, there is one called "The Dance at the Phoenix," in which an old woman, who has long been a virtuous wife, is so mastered by an irresistible impulse that she slips away from her sleeping husband and returns to the giddy habits of her youth. There is a story in *A Group of Noble Dames* which also illustrates the fact that we none of us know what is in us. Like Barbara of the House of Grebe, we believe that our love is divine, and that no physical misfortune, no moral delin-

quency could make us cease from loving those we now hold dear. Yet it takes only a moment's thought about our instinctive repugnance to all that is abnormal and deformed, to convince us that, confronted with such a mutilation, we, like Barbara, might find our boasted love was only human, and could but shudder and turn away. "Squire Patrick's Lady" and "An Imaginative Woman" show curious psychological problems, but, though the latter well reveals the tragedy of that utter loneliness and lack of sympathy which can drive to death two sensitive people, who, if they could have known each other, would have found companionship and comfort, they do not add any new shade to the sombre picture we have watched Hardy paint. *(+ his realization of this fact?)*

If we leave a general consideration of the novels and turn to particular events and scenes, the irony of life is clearly evident. There is a short story called "The Waiting Supper" which is a typical illustration. The heroine who originally married the wrong man is on the eve of marriage with the right one, when her former husband who has not been seen for some years, and is supposed to be dead, returns to her. He merely greets her and promises to return in an hour. She waits not only the hour and the night, but days and years; afraid to marry her lover, lest this unwelcome husband come again. When they have both grown so old and staid that it no longer seems worth while to change their state of courtship for the state of marriage, his skeleton is found at the foot of a dam, where it has lain ever since the night he interrupted their union. One of the *Wessex Tales*, "Fellow Townsman," has to quote its author, "that curious refinement of cruelty in the arrangement of events which often proceeds from the bosom of the whimsical god at other times known as blind Circumstance." The hero hears of the death of an unloved and unsympathetic wife, just one half hour after the marriage of a girl he has long loved. It is said of this man that his eyes had a curious look, best described by the word "bruised," "the sorrow that looked from them being largely mixed with the surprise of a man taken unawares."

There is a certain amount of significance in the kind of characters Hardy chooses. He is not fond of the deliberately

wicked man, who plans to do evil. Manston in *Desperate Remedies* and Dare in *A Laodicean* are the only ones of this nature. He is apt to introduce the voluptuous, selfish type of man, or even woman, who is driven by his instincts rather than by his reason; and invariably creates misery without specially desiring or planning to do so. Such are Wildeve in *The Return of the Native*, Sergeant Troy in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and to some extent Alec D'Urberville in *Tess*. Neither does he seem fond of depicting the man who is struggling with himself. In a measure we feel Jude's efforts to get the better of his many vices, and in the tale of "The Distracted Preacher," the conflict between the man's loyalty to his religion and his love for the fair smuggler is rather lightly touched, as is Knight's conflict in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*; but in general man is not struggling with himself, but with a malignly indifferent power outside him. We have no Markheims, no Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hydes. The typical Hardy hero is a passive man, more inclined to contemplation than to action, to endurance than to defiance. The Mayor of Casterbridge is his one strenuous character in our American sense of the word. There is an expression in common speech very applicable to the Mayor. "He brought it on himself." Indeed the Mayor cannot shirk the responsibility of his pride and stubbornness, can not place the blame on a cruel providence. But there is an irony in the Mayor's life, an irony with a truth in it that strikes home, as do all the Hardy ironies. When the Mayor does learn humility, when he does see his folly, his energy is gone, has been eaten up by these very mistakes. He knows how to begin a new life, but he has neither the desire nor the will. The "wisdom to do" comes with "departure of the zest for doing."

The "insignificant" tragedies are, then, without doubt, an integral part of the work of Hardy. The question arises whether he has so emphasized this side of existence because he is always seeing it, or because he needs to see it in the interests of artistic productions. He has himself said that "the crash of broken commandments is as necessary an accompaniment to the catastrophe of a tragedy as the noise of drum and cymbals to a triumphal march," and Maeterlinck

has assured us that the "Angel of Sorrow can speak every language—there is not a word but she knows; but the lips of the Angel of Happiness are sealed, save when she tells of the savage's joys." Furthermore, Hardy tells us, when he writes on "Candour in English Fiction" in the *Eclectic Magazine* for March, 1890, that there is a revival of interest in great dramatic movements, in the collision between the individual and the general, once worked out by the dramatists of the Age of Pericles and those of the Age of Elizabeth. But, though things move in cycles, they are not true cycles, but what Comte happily characterized as "a looped orbit." We do not have revolution, but evolution, and the collision of to-day between the general and the individual demands new and original treatment. The original treatment which he mentions is a disclosure of those laws which are merely social expedients and have no basis in the heart of things; and the showing of the triumph of the commonplace majority over the exceptional few. Such a statement of present-day needs in art may easily be stretched so as to cover all that is sombre in his own work, but it by no means proves that there is any divorce between his artistic instincts and his philosophy of life. Rather it shows that he mentions as artistic subjects, the very problems of the day which he considers most pressing. As for the feeling of the futility of all things, which he does not mention as an artistic possibility, that is too much a part of the poems, of the novels, and of the chorus of *The Dynasts*, and is too frankly stated in various magazine articles to be merely an artistic atmosphere. It must be part of the man's philosophy of life.

Closely connected with this question of how much gloom is to be regarded as an artistic scheme, is the kindred one of how far these little accidents, like the losing of letters and the delay of news, are to be regarded as true ironies of fate, how far as necessary devices of the drama or novel. There are dramas into which the element of extraneous chance does not enter, where naked soul is brought into contact with naked soul, openly and directly, and the conflict lies in the clash of forces bared. Such is *Antigone*, such is *Monna Vanna*. But if you imagine yourself constructing a drama or a dramatic

novel, how could you do it unless you made some use of such devices as the dropping of letters, overhearing of conversations, and chance encounters? Situations must be made dramatic, they must convey to the spectator or reader the conditions that are in the minds or natures of the actors, and as they are sufficiently true to the experience of every one, the extraneous chances are legitimate. To be sure there is the finest art in selecting those circumstances which carry conviction. When as in Eden Phillpott's *Secret Woman*, the dashing rain interrupts a tense and powerful scene and drowns the one sentence which would have saved the whole tragedy, the mind of the reader revolts. The circumstance is too abnormal. There are deaths also that are too opportune. We feel that the hero dies because he troubles his creator.

If, then, some extraneous chances are, though not absolutely necessary, a highly valuable part of dramatic construction, what ones and how many should be so considered? The answer seems to be, all those that are inevitable, all those that are of the nature that if this hadn't happened, something else would, to bring about the result or the catastrophe. As we shall see, this will by no means cover the ironical chances of the Hardy stories. The "brute chances" which are inevitable are those which come because the characters have put themselves in a position where something must happen. *Othello* often seems a drama of pure accidents that are brought about by the wicked scheming of Iago; and Desdemona seems a mere victim caught in his evil machinations. But Desdemona has put herself in a position where there is every possibility that something will befall her. She has married a man of different race, age, religion, and traditions; married him because of a romantic attachment. There is always the bare possibility that she might find life a smooth sailing, but the chances are, as we say, that she will not, and that Iago but brought to a focus what sooner or later must have come. So in *The Return of the Native*, Mrs. Yeobright is turned away from the door of her son, because Eustacia, his wife, thinks he hears her knocking, and he does not. It is the discovery later, that she has been there, and has not succeeded in gaining admittance, which brings about the rupture between Clym and Eus-

tacia, a rupture that from the first was inevitable, when one thinks of the difference between them, that what was valuable to her in the shape of gayety and social position and adventure, was as dust and ashes to him, with his desires of improvement for his fellowmen. It is too old and common a situation to leave us in any doubt of the issue. Eustacia carried within her the seeds of discord, and had it not come through the turning away of Mrs. Yeobright, it would have come in some other fashion.

So much for what is inevitable. In this book the inevitable and the utterly extraneous stand side by side. On the night when Eustacia has decided to flee with Wildeve, Clym's letter ought to have been brought to her; but first it is forgotten by the bearer, then, when it is delivered, her grandfather thinks she is asleep and does not give it to her. Had she received it, she might have gone back to Clym, and perhaps they would have wrought out a mutual forbearance. Such are the "brute chances" that are not inevitable. They are our constant regrets. They are the little, trifling things that, had they been different, might have changed the whole course of our lives.

In *Two on a Tower*, again, some accident must come. A young idealist of twenty-two who knows nothing of the world is bound to tire of a woman twelve years his senior. But the accident that does come is not inevitable. They are married, and then they find that through a technical flaw, their marriage is illegal. In a generous impulse, the woman refuses to remarry, and sends her lover away to study, not even allowing herself to have the address, lest she be tempted to write to him and thus interfere with his career. And all her later troubles and her tragedy come upon her because she has not this address. In *Tess*, this species of accident is not at all inevitable. We feel them as part of the forces that are arrayed against her, and give her no chance; and perhaps the most agonizing point in the book is when Tess, who is resisting Alec D'Urberville with all her strength, doubting her own powers of endurance, writes that letter of heart-broken appeal to Angel Clare, and we know that it is lying in his father's parsonage, as the net closes round her.

The ironic circumstance which is simply ironic and not inevitably connected with the situation is very common in the Hardy novels. The case of houses which are held on lives, and have the possibility of renewal, which is discovered too late, is a favorite one. It forms part of the plot of *Desperate Remedies*, and in *The Woodlanders*, Giles discovers just twenty-four hours after the death of the last holder that he could have added more lives and renewed his holding. The result turns him from a rich man to a poor one and causes him to lose Grace. In a short story, "Netty Sargent's Copyhold," in *Life's Little Ironies*, the heroine who has lost her property by an hour, gets the better of chance, by cleverly bolstering her uncle in a chair, and making the dead fingers sign the name, while the witness who is looking in at the window, never dreams of the forgery.

Of all the stories that show this irony of the "brute chance," none so well and pithily expresses it as that one in *Life's Little Ironies*, called "The Winters and the Palmleys." A man enters a house at night to find his own love letters, which he does not want his scornful mistress, who has cast him off, to show to her new lover. The box he seizes happens to contain money as well as the letters; he is arrested for stealing, tried and hanged. This is only exceeded by Guy de Maupassant's "La Ficelle," in which the mere stooping to pick up a piece of string in obedience to a thrifty habit he had, involves a man in an arrest for a lost purse; and then, later, when the neighbors will not believe his protestations of innocence, even after the purse has been found, his trouble drives him to illness and death. One may say that these accidents were greatly helped by people; that in the first case the boy's death was due to the unkindness of his former sweetheart in not telling that he came merely for the letters, and in the second, the man's tragedy was caused by the lack of charity of the neighbors, too prone to believe the worst. All this is true, but it does not alter the primal fact that the men suffered for what they in no wise merited, and that a trivial accident called down upon them as heavy a curse as the wicked acts themselves could have done.

In Hardy, then, "brute chance" runs riot. If we took

from him the undelivered letters, the marriage licenses that have a mistake in date or place, the leases where chance of renewal is discovered after the time has expired, the marriages that come too early or too late, we should spoil the whole fair fabric of his tales. There is a reason why we have no right to take these accidents away. They are sufficiently true to life to be legitimate. For we are all familiar with these accidents. We receive every trivial letter that is ever sent to us, one day we fail to get an important one and an irrevocable misunderstanding is the result. There are two people whom we have sedulously kept apart for years; on the day that one calls, the other is sure to drop in for dinner. In more trivial affairs we recognize the impishness that lurks in inanimate things. It is when we are hurrying to catch a train that our shoe lacer breaks or the laundry fails to bring back our clean collars, when we can least spare our watch that the main spring snaps. We realize, too, how often we say "Just my luck," when we have hastened to see a man and find he left an hour earlier that day, or are impelled to take a train which is then delayed. These are the kinds of circumstances which Hardy intensifies and emphasizes.

What we are apt to forget in a persistent reading of his work is that "brute chance" is not always adverse, though perhaps it needs some other descriptive adjective when it is favorable. We just as frequently realize that things happened in the nick of time, that there was good fortune in the taking of a certain train, that some kind power warned us to make a visit or write a letter which later events proved to be a happy inspiration, as we call attention to our ill-luck. The fortunate chances, the saving encounters are never the theme of Hardy. This sense of unfairness is what makes the optimistic people whom he troubles, eager to have his admirers admit that he is one-sided. And they must admit it squarely, though over-emphatic is a better word than one-sided since no one is called upon to give us all sides of life. But it is a genuine and grave fault to over-represent one side of life, because that is to make it untrue to life as a whole. In admitting this fault, however, his admirers do not forget the virtue that causes the fault, that he has had the supreme courage to

grapple with this "brute chance" of which we are all more or less afraid, and to lay bare its brutality. For what reason, say the easy-going optimists, life is sad enough in itself, when we read books, let us have something to make us happier and to help us. And they do not realize that they have delivered themselves bound to the enemy, that they have admitted that life is as intrinsically sad as the pessimist finds it, and the only difference is that he cares to look at what they would cover. Still there remains the plea for reading only what will help us and give us courage to go on. But there are helps to be found in the world's dark places, as well as in its bright ones. Moreover, if it come to a question between truth and the most helpful illusion; let us, the pessimist would contend, take the truth though it be of ink-deep blackness, and the illusion be bursting and shining with light.

There remains one question. Is there never any explanation of these occurrences which seem whims of destiny? Maeterlinck in his book *Wisdom and Destiny* has made a distinction between inner and outer destiny which is a vital one. It is a point unrecognized or unemphasized by both Schopenhauer and Hardy. If our aim in life is happiness, and if by happiness we mean the avoidance of pain, then we are not likely to attain it, and will surely find the world a place of misery and suffering. But how if our aim is not happiness but growth, how if we are courageous enough to say that we do not care what comes to us or to our friends, for that is the harder, what pain, what tragedy, so long as we may be sure that we are all advancing and expanding? This it is which makes Maeterlinck say that it matters not at all what comes to you, but it matters supremely how you take it. There are over-conscientious people who take life as a discipline and study every event to see why it was sent to them and what lesson they must learn from it. To these, the remark of Bernard Shaw is applicable, that the world is no one person's moral gymnasium. Better than this self-centered reasoning is the attitude of the Mayor of Casterbridge, "I am to suffer, I perceive! So much scourging as this, then, is it for me?" But there is more than a shade of difference between these extremes and the attitude of Maeterlinck, since, then, this has come, I will bear it like a man and I can get something out of it.

In general, Hardy recognizes this truth that it is better to deal with true things than with illusions, even if the latter are happier, and he apparently feels that he is dealing with the true side. In one particular case, that of Tess, he does recognize the value of inner experience. She, he confesses, had a mental harvest. There are three possibilities in the life of Tess—to have married an Angel Clare, before she met Alec, when her splendid possibilities might have borne glorious fruit, and we could have had no story, because it would have been one of Maeterlinck's "fireside dramas," for which there are no adequate words; to have had the life she did have and reaped some sort of a mental harvest; or to have married, as would naturally happen, some stolid countryman and reaped no harvest. The first would undoubtedly have been the best, but surely the last is the worst, even though it involves no sin against society, and no actual pain. But Hardy does not seem to feel that intensity of feeling, richness of experience balance the extremities of pain by which that experience is won. Or perhaps he thinks the intensity and richness could come as well in happy fashion. There is no reason why they could not, they simply do not. Most of us have to be jogged into our depths.

When Maeterlinck says that dramas between sages are unheard of, and those that center about the sage are rare, and result always in victory for the sage, he means not that tragedies do not come to the sage, but that in his wisdom he draws the sting from the tragedy. It is like Browning's poem, "Instans Tyrannus"; you can have no tyrant, unless you have the slave who acknowledges oppression. Did not Clym Yeobright win something precious out of his mistakes and sufferings? Was not the Bathsheba Troy whom Gabriel Oak won a richer woman than the Bathsheba Everdene he wanted? Did Giles Winterborne die quite in vain when he could inspire the love of a Marty South? Was not her life ever the richer though she had never a word of encouragement? Think of the depth of the love that could say, "But I—whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gad, and when-

ever I turn the cider-wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name, let me forget home and heaven! But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things." There is a terrible double irony in this when we think that this girl who could be so faithful, never had one word or smile of love from Giles, and that the woman for whom he gave his life in love, had left Marty alone to mourn him. But is there not also a rich recompense in the possession of a love that can be faithful unto death, or that can lay down its life for the loved one? Let us acquire our depths of experience quietly and easily if we can, but let us acquire them at any price.

Does this cover the whole situation? No, for there are the Eustacia Vyes, the Farmer Boldwoods, the Mayors of Casterbridge, who win no wisdom from their experience. They have the elements of tragedy in them. Just as there are some situations in which we feel tragedy to be inevitable, so there are some characters that have the seeds of an evil fate in them. As Maeterlinck has well said, "If Judas go forth to-night, it is towards Judas his step will tend, nor will chance of betrayal be lacking; but let Socrates open his door, he shall find Socrates asleep on the threshold before him, and there will be occasion for Wisdom." That is his reason for saying that a character like Louis XVI of France is not the mere puppet of an evil destiny, but a man who attracts a bad destiny to him. And even Emily Brontë, whom he has greatly praised because she so ennobled a meagre destiny by the richness she put into it, is responsible for that meagreness since she lacked the daring that would have brought her a more varied existence. So we feel that in no world, no matter how purposive, no matter how kind the circumstances, how happy their lot in life, could Eustacia and the Mayor have been true children of wisdom. Eustacia was born a rebel and died a rebel; the Mayor rose and fell with a stubborn, bitter pride. There are people for whom we can not honestly predict anything but sorrow and turmoil; and for whom we cannot see any rest except in death. They seem born to a doom, but they are born to it because they will not understand what is understandable. Here it is not the universal which is blind and purposeless, it is the individual who is blind.

There are cases, however, to which Maeterlinck's explanation will not apply. In *The Return of the Native, Far from the Madding Crowd, Trumpet Major* and *the Woodlanders* we have four stories of patient men who gave all possible tenderness and constancy to a woman and were long unrewarded. There is a measure of irony in the fact that not one of them won the girl he wanted in her freshness and bloom, but aside from this one point in common, the destinies meted out to them were very different. Both Giles Winterborne of *The Woodlanders*, and John, the Trumpet Major, failed utterly to win the women they desired, but to each was given a heroic part. Giles could die for Grace's good name, John could sacrifice himself to his brother. Both had their inner reward, for to love deeply and truly and to the point to which they loved is as rich and varied an experience as to be loved, and to live in plain, material happiness. Gabriel Oak, as we have seen, secured perhaps a better Bathsheba, so his fate can be justified; but what can be said of Tamosin and Diggorry Venn in *The Return of the Native*? They marry and are apparently happy ever after, but why did they need to wait so long? Tamosin Wildevie is no better a woman than Tamosin Yeobright, only a sadder one. Perhaps no blame attaches to fate, but rather to Mrs. Yeobright and to Tamosin's submissiveness, but this is just one of those things that are hardest to bear. Tragedy is not irretrievably bound up in Tamosin's character as it was in Eustacia's. It was not inevitable that she should suffer; it was a mere blunder. Surely our blunders do not need to be scourged so heavily as our faults. It seems that after we have allowed for all the advantages of wisdom and increased experience, there remains a residue of cases for which we can find no justification.

One of the things in daily life that has always seemed to me tragic in the deepest sense of the word, that is in the Schopenhauerian sense of being non-understandable, baffling, is that to the individual comes always the temptation he is least able to resist. If your will is weak, if decisions are hard for you, be sure that nothing but decisions will come your way. No explanation of an inner destiny or an inner triumph satisfies us here. This is among the residue of things

unexplained that the optimist must leave. It may be that we must regard our moral body as we do our physical one, and constantly practise exercises to strengthen our weakest part, but then the exercises should be graded, whereas now the heaviest weight seems often presented first. Of course it may be true, as Maeterlinck suggests, that we have more control over outside forces than is now apparent, and secretly attract events to us, but then why should we not secretly attract some guardian angel that will help us to win our way? Why should we attract only what makes us sink lower? This is what is really terrible about a book like *Tess*. She was responsible for her own downfall, she had that "slight incautiousness of character," inherited from her race, and that too great submissiveness which kept her from pleading her own cause, and winning Angel Clare back, after her disclosure had driven him from her. It is pitiful to think that these traits should wreck her. There are such splendid possibilities in *Tess*. What could she not have been under a happier fate, when she is so fine, and wins so much under the hard one meted out to her? "Thou hast rushed forward to the utmost verge of daring, and against that throne where Justice sits on high thou hast fallen, my daughter, with a grievous fall," says the Chorus to Antigone. Schopenhauer and Hardy have gone to the utmost verge of daring and have brought back the message that Justice is blind, or far removed from her blind servants. We hope and believe that this is not the final answer, we must admit they have a right to it.

This brings us to the point of vicarious pain. William Watson has said of *Tess*, that it is a direct arraignment of the morality of vicarious pain. Vicarious suffering is so essential a part of life that no intelligent person will question it. What men like Schopenhauer and Hardy do resent is not suffering for the sake of another, but suffering for the sake of suffering. There have been times when men saw much virtue in suffering, when they felt themselves purified and bettered by it; and there are still people who welcome it in this spirit. As we have seen, there is just an atom of justification for their view, because we are more often stirred to our depths by sorrow than by joy. But the atom of truth will

not save the day, for the very greatest joys can go so much deeper than the greatest sorrows, that pain is not absolutely necessary for depth. Suffering as such, then, has no value, and it is the sense of suffering when no one profits that so wrings the heart of Hardy.

Another problem from the residue of the unexplained is the fact that inner growth is often so lop-sided. Here in America we are very familiar with a struggle that has become one of our national ideals, that of the self-made man, of the lesser Abraham Lincolns and James A. Garfields. There is always much to be respected and admired in these displays of pluck and bravery and courage, but there is usually something to be deplored, a something which the man who has won often recognizes himself, that he has not been able both to be and to become. People can not seem to win two things in life. The ripeness that comes from leisure, and the energy that comes from resistance to heavy odds appear to be always opposed. If the day ever comes when wealth is more evenly distributed, perhaps these tragedies will lessen, for they seem not absolutely unavoidable. In the meantime, one wonders why so simple a desire as that for moral and inner growth is not more easily gratified, why the people who have "souls to invite," so seldom have time to invite them. This, three times intensified, is the tragedy of Jude. Everything is against him, nothing encourages him in his struggle to carry out his noble intentions and aspirations. About Clym Yeobright, who has the same noble ideals of helping the less fortunately endowed, we feel that though he is maimed and crippled by his experiences, though he will never reach what he should have reached, yet he has some compensation. The portion of Jude is utter defeat, "I felt I could do one thing if I had the opportunity, I could accumulate ideas and impart them to others." And the opportunity was denied him.

The result of the usual view of tragedy, which takes as its basis that the world is purposive, is triumph. However many may be the deaths and agonies we are called on to endure, however our feelings of sympathy and pity and horror may be wrought up and stirred, we close the book with the sense that there is a right, and that the right triumphs. Somewhere a flag is waving.

In the Schopenhauerian view of tragedy and in the Hardy exemplification of it, no flags wave. We may feel indeed that there is a right, but it does not always triumph. We have often the irony of a right that is defeated. With Schopenhauer this tragicness in life results in renunciation. Accept the inevitable; that nothing is worth living for; that all is not only vanity, but can be nothing else. Then give up this illusion of happiness, renounce the world and its ways, and so find peace. In Hardy we have not renunciation, but resignation. Accept the inevitable, what is to be, will be, and as they say in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, "'Tis to be and here goes will carry a body through it all from wedding to churching, if you only let it out with spirit enough." Life is so made, and must be so endured. If you realize this, if you expect nothing better, if like Elizabeth Jane you know its intrinsic nature is tragedy and not comedy, then your expectations will be less and your disillusion easier.

Few more words are needed to show that both Schopenhauer and Hardy are alike in regarding the manifestation of a purposeless world as tragedy of an insignificant, petty and hopeless nature. From the idea that will is the ground of everything, and that will in itself lacks harmony, life is seen to be inharmonious and therefore tragic. A dramatic portrayal of this lack of harmony will teach the actors that there is no prize in life worth the pain of existence, and that renunciation of life is best. This is the Schopenhauerian statement of tragedy. Hardy gives us stories that are illustrations of this view. People are not happy, but we do not feel that there is any satisfactory reason why they should not be happy. Life is simply against happiness. A little mistake, like the joke of sending a valentine to a man, may bring down as heavy a doom as a premeditated murder. Error and chance rule the world, not justice. So we get characters who are not aggressive nor strenuous, who seldom take the initiative, who do not demand much, who do not challenge life, who scarcely aim at all, much less at the stars; but who are quiet, restful, kindly, humorous, and above all capable of endurance. Placed, against their will, in a world not to their liking, they are resigned to it and will make the best of it.

CHAPTER IV.

OUTCOME OF PURPOSELESSNESS.

The man on the street who consents to talk to you about a purposeless world has always one retort, "What's the use of trying, then?" "If I am not to be rewarded for my good deeds, nor punished for my bad ones, either here or hereafter, why should I care what I do, why not yield to every impulse, good or bad?" If he is of a more thoughtful turn of mind he will tell you not to talk about such an idea. "We must believe that in some fashion things are good or the world would not go on; there would be no ambition, no enjoyment. We would all lie down and die, the quicker the better." To some of them the notion is so repugnant that they declare no one could honestly hold it. Those who do must believe in something good, even when they say they do not; they must believe even though their belief is unknown to themselves.

What men believe unknown to themselves we must omit from our consideration, and we must, in common respect, grant that our pessimists are not telling us of idle theories but of deepest convictions. In truth, the view of the man on the street is shallow and neglects two important considerations. The first is that life is largely a matter of habit. By the time the pessimist comes to his opinion about the futility of life, he is usually so involved in these futilities of duties, affections, and pleasures that he cannot break away from them, even when he sees their vanity. He does not necessarily become the man with the long face and gloomy sentence. Indeed, there are many optimists who show more gloom over their individual woes than the pessimist does over the entire gloom of the world. For the pessimist the sun still shines, trees are still green, friends are still worthy of cultivation, and mankind an object to arouse compassion and service.

This brings us to the second point about the pessimist which the man of the street forgets—his great courage. All pessimists must have courage; for, to look upon this dark

side of life is as deep and heartrending an experience as one can imagine. "Pessimism" says Royce, borrowing a word of Hegel's, "isn't the doctrine of the merely peevish man, but of the man who has once feared not for this moment or for that in his life, but who has feared with all his nature; so that he has trembled through and through, and all that was most fixed in him has become shaken." A man of no courage will either refuse to fear in this fashion, or the fear will drive him to voluntary death. But the man of courage will look and turn away to lead the most brave and upright life. Sometimes it seems as if the courage of a pessimist were the only courage deserving the name. It is easy enough to be brave when you think things are good on the whole, and your suffering is but for a day; but to be brave when you have no hope of anything better takes a strong soul. The philosopher, Scipio, in Owen Wister's *Virginian* says that the courage of your convictions isn't half enough courage. "There's times in life when a man has got to have courage without convictions—without them—or he is no good."

This courage without convictions is the practical outcome of purposelessness, and it lends to the work of the pessimist when he chances to be a writer, a tonic quality. Can any one read that little book of pessimistic verses, *A Shropshire Lad*, without feeling braver? Isn't it one cry of courage all the way through? Its verses are sad and gloomy enough, they hold out no hope except the rest of death, they breathe the unquiet life of man, and the injustice of the things he encounters as strongly as do the *Wessex Poems* or the *Poems of Past and Present*, but they ring with a call to arms.

"Therefore, though the best is bad
Stand and do the best my lad."

and never shame the Shropshire land that gave you birth. It is this same quality of courage, of a humanity that refuses to be dwarfed into sluggishness by destiny, which makes one critic call Hardy a "heroic optimist," and class him with Ibsen, Zola, Tolstoi; and which makes another biographer say of him that his satire and bitter irony are not dispiriting in the

sense in which cynicism is dispiriting, for, as he depicts it, "life is not little, nor cheap, nor easily found out."

The theoretical outcome of purposelessness is also a matter of courage, the courage involved in facing truth. There is a passage in William James' *Will to Believe* in which he says that the questions, "What do you think of yourself?" "What do you think of the world?" are questions that all must deal with as seems good to them. If we decide to leave the riddle unanswered, it is a choice; if we waver in our answer, that is a choice and whatever we do we take a leap in the dark. The pessimist is the one who cannot leave the question unanswered, cannot waver, but must take the leap in the dark. Two characteristics mark the pessimist. One, the fact that extreme sensitiveness can often drive a man to cynicism or pessimism is best expressed by a poetical phrase of Nietzsche, "I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore." The other is best formulated by Professor Royce, "It is the way of men who demand ultimate answers, and who, if they can't get them, prefer doubt, even if doubt means despair." An arrow of longing for an ultimate answer! What can such a man bring for an answer to the riddle?

The final outcome of a purposeless view of life is no more than the final outcome of a purposive one, a single theory which all pessimists can accept, but an unevasive statement of the truth as they see it, and a tentative solution. Naturally these solutions will differ. Indeed we have seen Royce stating the problem of evil as clearly as ever Schopenhauer gave it, yet arriving at an optimistic conclusion. It behooves us now to see what tentative conclusions Schopenhauer and Hardy reached, and whether these are similar.

I do not know that the solution of Schopenhauer can be called a tentative one; at least it is not tentatively offered, if it must be so accepted. He regarded the path of asceticism as the only absolutely final outcome of a purposeless view of the world. The idea of renunciation is no new one either in eastern or western religion, but I think it usually has more of the purpose of purification in it, of a freeing of some power which is impeded by the grossness of matter, than of the

X purpose of release from the capricious nature of pain. Schopenhauer of course could not counsel the freeing of anything, since he saw nothing to free. This restless, capricious longing is the heart of all willing, and when the individual has freed himself from this unrest, nothing is left. As he says at the close of the fourth book of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, if you still have the nature of will, you will consider this final annulment of the will, nothing; but if you have learned to penetrate this nature of the will, and have once seen to the full its wholly irrational character, then you will regard this world and all the worlds of your desires as nothing.

+ Professor Royce has an illuminating suggestion about Schopenhauer. He says that the path from mediaeval mysticism to a system of pessimism is a very short one. Both lay infinite emphasis on the vanity and unsatisfactoriness of the world, both advise the forsaking of such illusory delights; but where the one finds recompense in a contemplation of the divine perfection, the other finds no compensation and at the most can only hope for release. The contemplation of the mystic is vague and ecstatic and dream-like, he is bound to have waking moments when the vision is faint. It is these waking moments which the pessimist seizes and emphasizes. Mr. Royce quotes Bunyan's saying at the end of his *Pilgrim's Progress*—"I saw in my dream that there was a way to the bottomless pit from the very gate of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction" and adds, "Now, Schopenhauer's mission it was to explore this highly interesting way with considerable speculative skill." So our Thomas à Kempis whom we unhesitatingly accept in the most orthodox circles, and our Schopenhauer whom we cast out as a heretic, ought to be of the same value in showing us this true picture of life, that it is essentially restless, craving, finitely tragic, and that it never can be anything else. And the criticism one could bring against such a mysticism as that of Thomas à Kempis is the same that one could bring against the pessimism of Schopenhauer that in their asceticism both provide us with a somewhat colorless, bloodless substitute for living. They give us no fighting formulas, and yet the world presents itself to us as a place of battle.

This is the plain man's revolt from the Schopenhauerian outcome of purposelessness. The philosopher's dissatisfaction is of another nature. To him the really interesting question is whether purposiveness is a matter of choice or a matter of discovery; whether the nature of our consciousness demands that we put purpose in the world, as Kant has shown it to demand that we put law there; or whether we know it to be there or not to be there from the facts of our experience. Schopenhauer's value lies rather in his insight into a real problem of life, than in anything he has contributed to this genuine philosophical side of the problem. This kind of a discussion of purposelessness need not concern us here, and is only mentioned because of its prophetic interest. If that philosopher should ever arise who could show in satisfactory manner what many have dimly felt, that purposiveness is a part of the nature of our consciousness, then some synthesis of pessimism and optimism would seem not impossible, till then we are like to have both.

The ultimate value of Schopenhauer for the general reader, then, will lie in no solution he has offered but in the boldness and frankness of his statement of what every one must realize, either dimly or clearly, as a real side of life. We do not either as philosopher or plain individual need to accept his doctrine that the "will to live" is everything. We are not obliged to say that the only road to happiness, if happiness it can be called, lies through the path of annihilation. But in these days of evolutionary doctrine and science, we cannot deny the seeming cruelty of the struggle for existence; in these days of introspection we cannot deny the incessant alternation of restlessness and insipidity. The day has gone by when we could simply assert there was purposiveness, or lose ourselves in a mystic admiration of it. We must have what might be called a "working" purpose; that is one that will take into account just this tragically capricious element of purposelessness in life. The value of a pessimism such as that of Schopenhauer, then, is to drive those who cannot accept it to a higher optimism.

Schopenhauer gave a very complete picture of the ideal and practice of renunciation. It was to be a giving up of

everything on the part of the individual and must, logically, result in race suicide. It was, however, the release of the individual that interested him. Eduard Von Hartmann followed the idea of renunciation further, and since Hardy is quoted in the *Real Conversations* of William Archer as saying that *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* suggested to him what seemed almost like a workable theory of the great problem of the origin of evil, it is not out of place to consider him here. We saw in reviewing Schopenhauer that the will which exists in men as the individual will, may exist in animals, in the bees for instance, as a will of the species, and in plant or lower forms of life in a still more vague, general and indefinable way. And we saw that man becomes conscious of this will and its nature, and that there are degrees of consciousness even among men. Von Hartmann starts at this point. The fact that we become conscious leads him to believe that there are two "Grunds" instead of one as Schopenhauer thought. These he calls, will and idea, or the unconscious and the conscious. We can not will without willing something, he says, and this something is the idea. The ideas are always present, but they are in the process of changing their nature; first they belong to the realm of the unconscious, then to that of the conscious. A large part of his work is devoted to a proof that these two, the conscious and the unconscious, exist side by side. Our reflex actions of which we are unaware, the traits of character that suddenly come to the surface to our very great surprise, the aim of nature for the propagation of the species disguised under the name of love, are a few of the many examples of the unconscious which he presents. The line of division is an unstable one. At present the unconscious is the stronger factor, but it is daily losing ground. In a sense the unconscious is the higher element, for it is always quicker, surer, and more far-seeing than the conscious.

One is reminded here of Maeterlinck, of his feeling that the future is within us, that we ought to be able to penetrate the veil of the unconscious, and some day shall be able. Both of them agree that the conscious is our goal, that it is the higher in the sense of being that toward which everything is

tending. The control of the unconscious by the conscious seems to be the final aim. To Maeterlinck this idea is fraught with hope, to Von Hartmann it brings only despair. Here he is very like Schopenhauer in recognizing the unsatisfactory nature of the will, and in realizing that as we grow more conscious, we shall only be more aware of this unsatisfactoriness. He considers the possibility of happiness in this world, in some dreamed of hereafter, and in a world made better by the evolution of some better species. In the first case he finds, like Schopenhauer, that there is more pain than pleasure in the world, and that pain is active, while pleasure is only the negative result of the cessation of pain. The second is an impossible ideal. We can only think of two possible hereafters for individuals, one where there shall be no pain and no striving, the other a repetition of this present life. Of these the first is too suggestive of tediousness and insipidity, the second would have the same pains that afflict us now. The third theory of a possible better finite world is also dismissed, because nothing could change the nature of the will, and that nature means suffering. So he, too, arrives at the solution of renunciation. His emphasis, however, is not on the enlightened individual man who decides not to live and stifles the will, but on some future time when the race, having attained full consciousness, shall, as a race, decree annihilation. The race is to struggle to acquire consciousness that it may work out its own redemption, that is, its cessation from pain, by decreeing its own annihilation.

The part of Von Hartmann that interests Hardy is not this final speculation, but the thought of the unconscious becoming conscious. The theory that *The Philosophy of the Unconscious* suggested to him (he says it is not Von Hartmann's own theory) he thus expresses, "There may be a consciousness, infinitely far off, at the other end of the chain of phenomena, always striving to express itself, and always baffled and blundering, just as the spirits seem to be." Mr. William Archer asks "Is not that simply the good old Manichæan heresy, with Matter playing the part of the evil principle—Satan, Ahriman, whatever you choose to call it?" And Mr. Hardy responds: "John Stuart Mill somewhere expresses

surprise that Manichaeism was not more widely accepted. But is not all popular religion in essence Manichaean? Does not it always postulate a struggle between a principle of good and an independent, if not equally powerful principle of evil?"

This, then, is a suggestion of one outcome of Hardy's philosophy, that he is inclined to think of the evil and good in the world as two opposed principles, rather than as one subordinated under the other. There are said to be three principal ways of accounting for the origin of evil. One is the Manichaean idea of dualism, two definite powers, one good, the other evil: another is that of Plato and Aristotle, the form or spirit, which is good, is resisted by an a-moral matter: the third, which St. Augustine used in controverting the Manichaean heresy, that the good estranges a part of itself as evil, in order that it may show the distinction between good and evil, and that by contending and conquering the good turns the evil into a higher good. Hardy's suggestion seems to include the two first. His remark that the consciousness which tries to express itself is baffled and blundering, leads us to think of the resisting matter, the reference to John Stuart Mill shows how much dualism he sees in the world about him.

In a chronological reading of the work of Thomas Hardy one often feels that it is not his purpose to suggest a solution, that he is, like Ibsen, concerned in stating the problem, in showing the bones which Life has bared to him, and that he awaits some solver of the riddle. At first we expect that solver to be an enlightened and improved man, and we go looking for some hint of Nietzsche's "Superman." Nietzsche finds the same trouble with the First Cause that Hardy does. "A God who is omniscient and omnipotent, and who does not even provide that His intentions be understood by His creatures—could that be a God of Goodness?" "Would He not be a cruel God, if He had the truth and yet could quietly look down upon mankind, miserably worrying itself for the sake of truth?" "God does not hear—and even if He did, He would not know how to help. The worst is that He seems incapable of communicating himself clearly." Nietzsche then turns utterly away from God and finds his solution

in man, not man of to-day who is a creature of false ideals and degradation, but man who is to come—"beyond-man," he calls him. The will is to be its own liberator, but it is the "Will-to-Power," and not the old restless "will-to-live" of Schopenhauer. This will has an aim, the aim of the perfected man. There is not in Hardy, so far as I have been able to discover, one passage that can be interpreted as hinting at a solution that is to come through man, either in the Nietzsche sense of an evolved "Superman" or the Maeterlinck sense of the man who shall have more knowledge of the secret laws of nature and of all the realm of the unknown. All that there is in him of this nature is the insistence that it is better to know the worst. "Who holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst." The change that he is going to find satisfactory must be more fundamental and far-reaching than a change in man, it must be a change in the First Cause Itself. And this brings us to *The Dynasts*.

The Dynasts is a summing up of all the Hardy philosophy. In the work of Hardy in general, and in the poems in particular, there is the constant recurrence of the idea that Nature and her Creator are blind. Poems like "By the Earth's Corpse," "The Bedridden Peasant," "God-Forgotten" all have the cry that God does not know what men are suffering. "The Sleep-worker," "The Lacking Sense," "The Mother Mourns" all tell of the awakening of the earth. This unconsciousness of the primal force is the theme of *The Dynasts*. The opening speeches give us the clue. The Shade of Earth asks, "What of the Immanent Will and Its Designs?" And the Spirit of the Years responds,

"It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
Eternal artistries in Circumstance,
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic rote,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence."

The Spirit of the Years is then asked why It behaves in this way, and suggests two theories; that the Immanent Will is

tired of this world and has betaken itself to others, and that this planet lost Its care by the acts of bad men early in its history. It is suggested that some shock may wake this sleeping Will; but the Spirit of the Years finds nothing in the past on which to build such a hope.

Once the Spirit of the Years is asked why this world should exist and it replies that it is as good as any, and when the second question is naturally put, "Why any?" it cannot answer. Only the Immanent Will can answer that, the Spirit has merely been rendered conscious by chance and must witness Its working. Once the Chorus tries to find some aim of the Will, but it only finds words Schopenhauer might have used, "to alter evermore things from what they were before."

Thus there is a double unconsciousness. The Will is unconscious of Its workings, men know Its workings, but are unconscious of Its aims. In these conditions, men, who are the puppets of the Will, can adore It or defy It. The Pities are the ones who adore. In the After Scene of the third volume of *The Dynasts* which takes place in the Overworld, the Semichorus of the Pities give their hymn of adoration. They praise the power and the might of the Thee to whom they sing. It must be good, it must have some reason for sending suffering. Anyway they will hope so, and will continue to sing.

"Exultant adoration give
The Alone, through Whom all living live,
The Alone, in Whom all dying die,
Whose means the End shall justify!"

The Spirit of the Years is almost charmed out of its long philosophy into the past when it too could give thanks and let raptures rule. But the Semichorus of the Years continues the aerial singing and gives the opposite picture to that of the Pities, the old unanswered question of why there should be lack of reason, why there should be lack of aim. If there is to be no answer, if Its blindness is never to be cured, then let those whom It has quickened into life, find a swift and sure extinction. Then the Chorus speaks the final word:

"But—a stirring thrills the air
 Like to sounds of joyance there
 That the rages
 Of the ages
 Should be cancelled, and deliverance offered from
 the darts that were
 Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all
 things fair!"

The time when the First Cause shall become conscious which, of course, may include a development of the consciousness of man, is what Hardy awaits.

The frequent use of the words conscious and unconscious throughout *The Dynasts* causes one to think of Von Hartmann. Both have the idea of development from an unconscious to a conscious state, but in the philosopher this consciousness is to be consummated in the race, in the author we get the impression it is to occur outside the race and come to men as an effect of change, rather than as a process of change. There is also something more hopeful about the latter, some feeling that the world's woe will lessen if these halcyon days should ever come. Though he intimates that men are no longer overpowered by the idea that the race shall cease to be, in such a poem as "I Said to Love," there is nothing in Hardy's work to indicate the solution of annihilation. The suffering and the turmoil of the present world, the aimless recurrence of the same events and deeds, the futility of all action, which *The Dynasts* of course emphasizes just as much as his other work, is no more an illustration of Von Hartmann than of Schopenhauer. Both philosophers have made much of the capricious element in life.

The other likeness to Von Hartmann in this drama, that the Unconscious is really the cause of great historical movements, and the men who carry them out and seem to plan them are but Its puppets, brings us to a troublesome question which has been showing its head in all the novels, and can no longer be shirked. It is a clear statement of determinism, and as such removes all direct responsibility from mankind. Yet we all feel that without freedom not only is no morality

possible, but no interest in men. Who cares to watch the most clever marionettes dance? Or is interested in the struggles of poor creatures who absolutely can not break a single one of the ropes that bind them? The answer to this difficult question seems to me to lie in no examination of the amount of responsibility that his characters feel for what ills befall them, nor even in the degree of repentance and remorse they show, nor yet in their own proneness to fatalistic conclusions, but in the more practical test of whether they seem like real people. Here Hardy has inadvertently given us a genuine answer. The people we read of in the novels and poems are the people we might meet to-morrow. They have just as much freedom to do anything as we have, are just as subject to mechanical accidents and chance rebuffs as we are. If we always see them exposed to such chances, there is nothing in the occurrences which could not happen to us or to the people we see about us. But in *The Dynasts* we have a set of puppets who are wound up, and who are so little like real people that they excite in us no interest. We are listless and lackadaisical before them. Napoleon as the pure man of destiny has been robbed of the trait which makes the Napoleon of history attractive. "If we be doomed to marry, we marry," they say in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. "That's not the case with some folk. There's that wife of mine. It was her doom not to be nobody's wife at all in the wide universe. But she made up her mind that she would and did it twice over. Doom? Doom is nothing beside an elderly woman—quite a chiel in her hands." We want the Napoleon who can see and seize the chances destiny offers, who has the power to make doom "a chiel." Determinism as we meet it in every day life is a deeply fascinating problem, determinism worked out into a system like that of *The Dynasts* has gone beyond the point of vital interest.

The final outcome of renunciation in Schopenhauer was unsatisfactory; so too is the outcome of a consciousness that is to be of Hardy. The first, however, repels all our instincts, the second has the failing of the mystics, that of being vague and remote and only valuable as a vision or dream. But the real dissatisfaction with a Hardy interpretation of life as

an ultimate interpretation is that it is man-centered. If one regards man as the pivot of the universe, then it is evident that the world is very little to his wants and needs. But there is no reason why he should be so regarded, nor why the earth should be treated as the only world. Both may be parts of some system, some whole. Evolution impresses on all of us the idea of development, and after a time we ask for what we are developing, since development in itself is no goal. We cannot answer that question. If we could, we might answer Hardy's other question of why we develop in this way of pain and suffering. To say that no future justification can recompense us for the pain we are now enduring, seems to make man unduly important. The First Cause may seem blind to us; it might not be so if we had the vision of all that It is doing. Here Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann are more consistent; they see that, in the nature of the will, which would make any superman, any glorified world, unhappy.

This deficiency applies to the strictly philosophical Hardy, and not to the author; and it is as the author that he is valuable to the general public; because it is as the author that he has given us this picture of the irrational and capricious side of life. Whatever may be the final reason why any world should exist, or why this world should; we are interested in it as it does exist, and in the impression it makes on man. Like Schopenhauer, his real value lies in the clear presentation of a side of life that is true. We are not all like the man in *The Dynasts* who had to believe the world was round because the singers up in the gallery said with such gusto every Sunday, "the round world and they that dwell therein." All the gusto in the world cannot take away the truth which these men have presented, that there is an inharmonious element in the life we are forced to live.

A friend who talked with me about the existence of this inharmonious element which Hardy had made her recognize, admitted that it was intellectually convincing, and wondered what would be left in life if you took it too much to heart. A few weeks later she sent me the following recently published poem as a very direct answer to her question of what the author's philosophy left in the way of desire to live. It is called "Let Me Enjoy." Song: minor key.

I.

"Let me enjoy the Earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.

II.

"About my path there flits a Fair
Who throws me not a word or sign;
I will find charm in her loth air,
And laud those lips not meant for mine.

III.

"From manuscripts of tender song
Inspired by scenes and souls unknown,
I'll pour out raptures that belong
To others, as they were my own.

IV.

"And some day hence, toward Paradise
And all its blest—if such should be—
I will cast glad, afar-off eyes,
Though it contain no place for me."

— Enjoyment and courage then, Hardy leaves, and the feeling of a very sweet spirit which recognizes that we are all seekers.

In our attempt to find out in what purposelessness consisted, and to show the effect of a purposeless view in the shape of tragedy, we found Hardy an excellent illustration of Schopenhauer. Both found the world a purposeless place, because an irrational place, where no aim was discernible. Both found the tragedy of life to consist in this conflict of man with a capricious unknown. In our attempt to find out the final outcome of such a purposeless view of life, we find Hardy no longer illustrating Schopenhauer. He is no follower of the path of renunciation. But we find, too, that what is valuable in both is not their solutions, but their presentations of the problem. No one has better recognized this element of caprice in life than Schopenhauer, no one has better illustrated it than Hardy.

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CHAPTER V.

ARTISTIC VALUE OF PURPOSELESSNESS.

There remains one more outcome of purposelessness to be considered, and that is the outcome of purposelessness in art. In presenting a purposeless view of life is the author attacking the very bones and sinews, not only of the faith and traditions in which the western world has been reared, but of its ideals of art? The value of Schopenhauer lay, as we have seen, in his giving us a true and graphic picture of a very real side of life, in making us feel that the world is a place of stern conflicts, and often of losing ones. We have tried to show that the work of Thomas Hardy is an admirable illustration of just this truth which Schopenhauer shows, that there is from man's point of view a large degree of chance and caprice in life, that we do meet with incompleteness, lack of fulfilment, thwarted ambitions, inharmonious circumstances. If all this is so, if Schopenhauer had insight into a truth which we can transcend but not refute, if Hardy had the same insight, if Schopenhauer expressed it in a popular philosophical system, and Hardy in a series of successful novels, why penetrate any deeper? Why ask whether the portrayal of a purposeless view is as successful as that of a purposive one?

For the reason that the art which presents a purposeless view of life is to the English mind not usual and seems deficient. Its very likeness to life is a point against it, its inactive characters are another detriment, its absence of poetic justice completes the ban. The opposites of these qualities are, it is true, what we have learned to expect in our art, they are not necessarily the things we must find there. To fully enjoy a man like Thomas Hardy or Eden Phillpotts or Guy de Maupassant requires a new point of view on the part of the reader, just as much as Romanticism once did, but it does not require a violation of one's artistic sense.

There is a sound saying, that books should be truer than life itself, which I have always taken to mean that some ideal-

ization is necessary on the part of the writer. He should give us what life ought to be rather than what it is. Daily life has not an eye for the dramatic, it is often trivial, discursive, it hides its hero under a mass of meaningless commonplaces. It is the business of the author to free the hero, to brush away the debris so that he stands out clear and commanding. In life we meet a man twelve times, and three out of the twelve may reveal to us significant traits about him; but occasionally it happens that we meet a person at a great crisis, and the flood gates are opened, and we know in a night what ordinarily it would take us years to learn. The writer must always take men at their revealing crises, even if the crisis is a prosaic every-day affair; he must make us know in one book, what we would be years in learning by observation. Out of the mass of raw material which life thrusts upon him, he must select what is vital to the hero, and to that act in the hero's life about which he centers his story. He must do more than take a photograph which is true to life, he must paint the portrait which gives hidden possibilities. He must do more than show us the mere individual, he must give us a hint of the Platonic archetype. And it is just here that one questions the purposeless view of life as a subject for art. Does it deal too much with what life is, and too little with what it ought to be? Should some truths be excluded, and are these among them?

There is a remark of Tranter Dewy in *Under the Greenwood Tree* which is pertinent. "My sonnies, all true stories have a coarseness or a bad moral, depend upon't. If the story-tellers could ha' got decency and good morals from true stories, who'd ha' troubled to invent parables?" All great art deals with truth, and it would seem at first that every art might deal with every truth; but a moment's thought convinces us of the soundness of the Tranter's statement. We must turn to the parables for all that side of life which expresses our aspirations, our longings, our dreams, our visions of perfection. Poetry and music which are much helped by sound, painting and sculpture and architecture, which have the aid of color and form, can express those things at which the novel can only hint, or at the most suggest by giving the

20
This is how it is more not from life, NOT as trying to show it as it is

negative or reverse side. The realm of the novel is those truths which have life in them, and will arouse our interest; one might say all those which have earth in them. Not all truths will bear transplanting. If we want to visit the New Jerusalem or the home of Ulalume, it is better to ascend with St. John or go down with Poe, but if we want to visit Vanity Fair, let us join Thackeray. If we want the strength of wise thoughts, let us go to Marcus Aurelius, but if we want to see a man struggling and falling in the effort to find wisdom, let us go to Lear.

Now it is just this large mixture of earth in a purposeless view of life which makes it a fit subject for a novelist, and even in his best poetry Hardy is still the novelist. The depths of life are for the novel, the heights are not; it can go to the bottomless pit, it can not ascend to the Celestial City. Doubtless Hardy could have pointed the way to the heights as well as to the depths of life. His temperament, his insight into the dark side has made him emphasize that. In doing this he has transgressed accepted traditions of art, he has violated no fundamental principles.

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That a character should be interesting and lifelike is an essential of art. In Thomas Hardy where the real protagonist is always the unknown, men and women lack initiative. One of his triumphs is to have created characters who are neither active nor aggressive and yet are not meekly submissive. They endure all things, are tinged with fatalism, resigned to the worst, but they will never cringe before their destiny. They have the strong characteristic of fortitude. Elizabeth Jane, who will not yield to the blandishments of prosperity, Tess, who will not overrate her fault, are splendid examples of this type of bravery. In the hands of a great artist then, neither the insistence on the dark problems of life, nor the prevalence of passive characters is truly detrimental. There remains the one question of fitting rewards and punishments.

art

Whatever may be the spirit of our day, bravado, courage, the desire to "see things as they are," or merely Nietzsche's "transmutation of all values," it is certain that we dare to question the truth and the value of poetic justice. This is the

more daring because it is an ideal of such ancient and respectable lineage. Hebrew precept, Greek tradition and a pronounced instinct of man all speak in favor of an allotment of rewards and punishments according to deserts. This is a demand for moral cause and effect. It presupposes that there shall inevitably be a chain of causes as definite as those of the mechanical world. It forgets that in the moral world there is always the factor of freedom. To-day we remember this. We no longer slur the last clause in the Century Dictionary, "not usually found in life." And we ask why that which is not usually found in life should usually be found in books about life.

There are two distinct types of poetic justice, both of which are found in literature. In Raphael's Cartoon the bystanders look with horror on the fallen Ananias who has paid the penalty of his perfidy. His justice comes from without in striking and fitting fashion. The spectator of the play of Othello is denied any such gratification when Iago, a man of greater perfidy, is not thwarted by Providence. Poetic justice here must depend on some recognition that there is a blackness of sin and a whiteness of purity, that virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment are more than copy-book maxims. The Ananias type of judgment seems to-day crude and naive. It does not fit in with our ideas of the importance of experience and of the psychological effect of sin upon the sinner, and of a God within man. Just as tragedy has gone from the extensive type of the Greeks to the intensive kind of Shakespeare and Browning, so poetic justice has passed to the working out within man rather than on a plane without. The effect on the witness is something like that produced by a Greek temple and a Gothic cathedral respectively. The death of an Ananias asks of the spectator only the definite emotions of pity and horror. The case of a Desdemona or a Duchess of Malfi calls for more. The witness of the tragedy must create his own justice. His own experience, and his own observation of life must suggest to him the inference to be made.

With a man like Thomas Hardy we come to the cases not where we are forced to create our own justice, but where

we can create none, if we would. He is a man of his time, a time which does not demand of its writers that like Milton they "justify the ways of God to men," but that they shall reveal them. Yet in revealing some of the ways of God to men, he is often said to have removed a bulwark of tragedy.

Tragedy involves four elements. The first and the only one absolutely essential is conflict. But as a conflict can only arise when some one starts it, the aggressive spirit becomes a part of tragedy. In all great tragedy, there is a feeling that one party to the conflict is something greater than the individual man. It may be collective men in the shape of convention or morality, or it may be the gods, or mysterious supernatural forces, but it is never man and man. Because it does touch on this deeper issue of man's relation to what is about him, some sort of a reconciliation is felt to be necessary. The spectator feels the need of squaring himself with these forces greater than he is. He must find his own feet before he can take up the burden of life again. Poetic justice is one way of effecting this reconciliation; it is not necessarily the only way.

In every day speech we use the word tragic with no hint of poetic justice. A Messina earthquake or a terrible railroad accident is tragic. The tragedy lies in the fact that it was undeserved by the victims and cannot be explained. It reminds us of man's situation in the world, that he is always virtually in conflict with forces greater than himself and can at any moment be worsted. Hardy's stories emphasize this sense of the ready-at-any-moment tragicness of life. Like the tragic episode they give the feeling of a conflict in which man is ever contending with all that is unknown about him, and this unknown is of course greater and more powerful than man. This is the tragicness of great forests, and of the open sea, and of terrible storms, and of primitive man in the midst of wild beasts and primeval nature—the insignificance of man and an unknown that can be terrible. This tragedy would lose its value, if man were always conquered. But he often wins. Every medical discovery, every mechanical invention, every new use of electricity is a point in his favor. He is a conqueror too in Pascal's sense of being a reed, the most feeble in nature, but a reed which thinks.

The courage of man in daring to contend with what is so powerful or even to live in the face of his own insignificance is what furnishes the needed reconciliation. The witness of it finds himself possessed of increased respect for humanity and belief in man. The admiration the world has always given to great explorers and discoverers becomes the due of every man, since all are voyagers on unknown seas. They are hero voyagers, too, for in the face of their own insignificance before great unknown forces, they live according to the best within them. They have thus accomplished their destiny whether they meet with success or failure. If it is failure and catastrophe, then the spectator is purged not of pity and terror, but of cowardice and all meanness of spirit.

The creation of this type of tragedy based on a lack of justice tends to broaden the tragic conception by taking away what is cut and dried about it. As long as poetic justice must be exemplified we know what is going to happen, we are only excited about how it shall come to pass. We have read the last chapter before we begin the book. But once the possibility of a lack of poetic justice is admitted, the written tragedy has all the excitement of life. We can not know the end till we come to it. To produce this uncertainty justice itself must be presented as an uncertain element. There can be all the characteristics Schopenhauer allowed the will, irrationality, blindness, capriciousness, but there can not be malignancy. If the unknown forces are bad then a cut and dried tragedy is established of a nature which hopeful man will not tolerate. We must feel that destiny is careless and uncertain, not that it is deliberately unjust.

That sense of mystery which always comes when we think at all about the destiny of man forms the attractiveness of this idea of tragedy. One type is excluded, that of Othello and Lear, where the catastrophe is brought about by the machinations of a thoroughly evil man. As long as man's premeditated wickedness alone is the cause of the suffering there is no illustration of a lack of justice. Othello and Lear are pessimistic tragedies, but their deepest pessimism to a generation brought up on the brotherhood of man is in their presentation of men who want to be wicked and work hard to accomplish it. They strike at the root of our pride in man which

forms the reconciliation element in a tragedy exemplifying a lack of justice. A genuine field for this form of tragedy is where the catastrophe is brought about by some weakness in the victim. Such a one is *Tess*. First the sensuality of Alec D'Urberville, later the priggishness of Angel Clare cause the sorrows of *Tess*, yet they are not responsible in the sense in which Iago and Edmund are responsible, for they do not consciously choose to do wrong. The blame is shifted from them to something outside of them. The more of this feeling of outside responsibility there is, the better an example of a lack of poetic justice we have. So that a purely objective story like Guy de Maupassant's "*La Ficelle*" is an almost perfect example of this type of tragedy.

To get used to this new conception whose tragicness consists in the uncertainty of life, of one's happiness, and even of one's moral character will not be accomplished in a day or an hour, perhaps not in a generation. We are fed too full of the daring hero who challenges the world. That the world should challenge a man is a harder thing to realize. We thrill with the youth who would paint the sun if he had to draw the sun down to dip his brush in it. It is the call of manhood, of all that is strong and virile in the races of the west. The other tragedy is perhaps only to be appreciated by an adult people. One hopes some children will always linger, that we shall never lose the youths who want to paint the sun, and the dramas about them. But growing up is inevitable and to the man who has truly grown up the feeling must come that life with all its compensation, its brilliance, its worth-whileness lies close to the tragic chaos of what is uncertain and unknown. Professor Royce says, "To see where the worst problems of life lie is a very black experience. And yet, so much does human reason love insight, that I have never met a man who was alive to these deepest problems, and who still repented him of his insight."

For those of us who do not repent us of our insight the day is not far distant when we may expect what a recent writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* describes as "another sort of tragedy founded upon the very inscrutability of the plotting of our lives." Indeed it is already upon us—for have we not Thomas Hardy?

This must be a unique example of
a Ph.D. thesis which is able to
dispense with footnotes!

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